180 QUESTIONS

ENQUIRIES ABOUT ISLAM

VOLUME ONE: THE PRACTICAL LAWS

Extracted from the Writings of
Āyatullāh al-ʿUẓmā Ḥājj Shaykh Nāṣir Makārim Shīrāzī

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TRANSLITERATION TABLE

The method of transliteration of Islamic terminology from the Arabic language has been carried out according to the standard transliteration table mentioned below.

Arabic	Transliteration	Arabic	Transliteration
ء	ʾ	ض	ḍ
ا	a	ط	ṭ
ب	b	ظ	ẓ
ت	t	ع	ʿ
ث	th	غ	gh
ج	j	ف	f
ح	ḥ	ق	q
خ	kh	ك	k
د	d	ل	l
ذ	dh	م	m
ر	r	ن	n
ز	z	و	w
س	s	ي	y
ش	sh	ه	h
ص	ṣ		

Long Vowels		Short Vowels	
ا	ā	ـَ	a
و	ū	ـُ	u
ي	ī	ـِ	i

سبحانه وتعالى - Free from Imperfections and Exalted is He

صلى الله عليه وآله - Prayers be upon him and his family

عليه السلام - Peace be upon him

عليها السلام - Peace be upon her

In the Name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

A FEW WORDS ABOUT THIS BOOK BY AYATULLAH AL-UZMA MAKARIM SHIRAZI

QUESTIONS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN a key to the treasures of human knowledge, and individuals and nations who tend to question less come to acquire a reduced share from this vast treasure. Basically, it is the right of every person to ask questions and obtain their answers, and none can be deprived of this logical and rational privilege.

The Noble Qurʾan has repeatedly emphasized this aspect - ask those, who possess knowledge, about that of which you do not possess knowledge.

﴿ فَاسْئَلُوا أَهلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لاَ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴾

The extensiveness of this Qur'anic ruling reveals that Islam does not recognize any limits or restrictions as far as the issue of 'questioning' is concerned, and permits the Muslims and even the non-Muslims (despite appearing to be general in meaning, this verse, in reality is addressed to the non-Muslims) to pose every kind of question, including those pertaining to various doctrinal, social, ethical and political issues, to those who have knowledge about them.

Exceptions to this rule are misleading questions asked with the intention of spoiling people's faith, distorting constructive ideas, fermenting disturbance and confusion in the minds of the public,

mere wrangling, baseless arguments, obstinacy and prejudice. In reality, these are not questions but destructive inhumane plots in the guise of questions.

In any case, since the Noble Qurʾan is a colossal encyclopaedia of divine sciences and human affairs, on numerous occasions and in connection with various verses, there are questions that come to the fore - a great number of which, due to lack of applicability in those periods, have remained unanswered in the books of past commentators.

While writing Tafsīr-e-Namūnah (with the assistance of some accomplished scholars), we strived to propound all these questions - especially those related to present-day issues - and to answer them in detail.

Since it appeared essential that everyone, especially the educated youths, possess the answers to these questions, Ḥujjatul Islam Agha-e-Ḥusainī and a number of honourable scholars of the Theological Seminary of Qum - whose names appear in the introduction of the book - exerted themselves greatly in extracting these questions and answers from the 27 volumes of Tafsīr-e-Namūnah and 10 volumes of Payām-e-Qurʾan. Consequently, they accumulated one hundred and eighty important questions and expended great effort in imparting a systematic arrangement to them - may Allāh accept their efforts.

It is hoped that this collection creates a new opening for everyone - especially the beloved Muslim youths – regarding issues pertaining to Islam and the Qurʾan, and serves as provision for all of us for the Day of Judgment.

Ḥawzah ʿIlmiyyah, Qum
Nasir Makarim Shirāzī

BIOGRAPHY OF
ĀYATULLĀ AL-ʿUẒMĀ MAKĀRIM SHĪRĀZĪ

THE EMINENT SCHOLAR, Āyatullāh al-ʿUẓmā Shaykh Nāṣir Makārim Shīrāzī was born in the year 1924 in the city of Shīrāz in Iran into a religious family who were well known for their high level of spirituality and noble ethical traits. His Eminence finished his elementary school studies in Shīrāz, where his intelligence, excellent memory and eagerness to learn, made him amongst the best students, often completing two years of studies in one year!

The conditions which existed in Iran in those days obligated this young man - who possessed such talent and aptitude - to choose the path of university and use his gifts to attain a secular qualification. However, the hand of destiny, the blessings of the Merciful Lord and his own secret desire to delve deeper into the teachings of Islam, drew this young man's attention towards Islamic studies; Especially because, since after the spring of 1941 (when Iran became embroiled in the 2nd World War), the regime's restrictions relaxed and the Islamic Seminaries gained renewed popularity.

HIS STUDIES

His Eminence started his formal Islamic studies at the age of 14 at Madreseh-ye Āghā Babākhān-e Shīrāz, and within a short period of time, he was able to complete the prerequisite preliminary studies such as morphology (ṣarf), Arabic grammar (naḥw), logic (manṭiq), exposition (bayān), and rhetoric (badīʿ).

He then turned his attention towards the fields of jurisprudence (fiqh) and principles of jurisprudence (uṣūl al-fiqh) and once again, due to his exceptional abilities, he was able to finish the study of the complete levels of introductory and both the levels of the intermediate Islamic studies in just four years! During this time, a group of students from the Islamic Seminary in Shīrāz were also benefiting from his classes.

The positive criticisms and personal opinions of His Eminence concerning the classes being held in Qum and also in relation to the need for including extra information within the books that were being taught at the various Theological Seminaries hinted at the bright future which awaited him. Meanwhile in religious gatherings in this city, his capabilities, genius, meticulousness and deep thought were witnessed by others and no one was able to deny his Allāh-given talents.

When this brilliant star was a mere 18 years old, through his penetrating thought and versatile pen, he wrote a commentary on the book Kifāyatu'l Uṣūl, in which he shed light on some ambiguous issues mentioned in this traditional work. At the age of 18, he formally entered the Theological Seminary of Qum and for the next five years, he attended the religious gatherings and classes of some of the greatest teachers of those days, such as Ayatullāh al-ʿUẓmā Burūjerdī ﵀ and other great personalities.

In order for His Eminence to become better acquainted with the illustrious scholars who were studying and teaching in one of the greatest Theological Seminaries of the Shīʾa, and to better understand their ideas and thoughts, in the year 1950, he made his way to the Ḥawzatu'l ʿIlmiyyah of Najaf al-Ashraf in Iraq. It was here that he was able to take part in the classes of some of the greatest teachers such as: Āyatullāh al-ʿUẓmā al-Ḥakīm ﵀, Āyatullāh al-ʿUẓmā al-Khūʾī ﵀ and Āyatullāh al-ʿUẓmā ʿAbdul Hādī al-Shīrāzī ﵀ and others.

At the age of 24, His Eminence was granted permission for independent reasoning (ijtihād) from two of the great scholars of Najaf al-Ashraf. In addition, Āyatullāh al-ʿUẓmā al-Ḥakīm ﵀ wrote a brief foreword to His Eminence's work, The Book of Ṭahārah.

His acquisition of knowledge continued with the great teachers in Najaf until economical restraints forced him to leave this holy city, and return back to Iran in the year 1951. He chose to settle in the holy city of Qum, which in those days required religious scholars.

Once again, he joined the circle of scholars who later on, had a profound impact on his life.

After returning to Iran, Āyatullāh al-ʿUẓmā Makārim Shīrāzī began teaching the intermediate and higher level of studies (khārij) in uṣūl al-fiqh and fiqh – and he has taught these classes for almost 28 years now, benefiting a large number of students in the process. Furthermore, after teaching many of the important books of fiqh, he went on to write summaries and notes of these great works. At present, his sessions at the khārij level on uṣūl are one of the most popular classes in the Ḥawzatul ʿIlmiyyah of the Shīʿa and there are close to 2,000 dedicated scholars and students who attend and benefit from his lectures.

From the time of his youth, he used to write books in various fields of Islamic studies such as theology, Islamic awareness and the issue of wilāyah (of the Ahlu'l Bait عليهم السلام). Later, he started to write on the exegesis of the Qurʾan, fiqh and uṣūl al-fiqh and he is currently recognized as one of the most important writers in the Muslim world.

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

He played an active role in the events which culminated in the Islamic Revolution of Iran, and it is because of this that the Shah imprisoned him several times. He was exiled on three separate occasions to the cities of Chabhār, Mahābād and Anārak. After the Revolution, he was appointed to the first Council of Representatives (Majlis-e Khubragān) where he played an important role in formulating the first constitution.

HIS VALUABLE CONTRIBUTIONS

Āyatullāh Nāṣir Makārim Shīrāzī has been very active in various fields of teaching and guiding the upcoming scholars of the Theological Seminary of Qum, and has initiated various projects, of which we will mention just a few:

1. A Religious Publication of the Shīʿa Centre: For a long time, His Eminence felt the need for the Ḥawzatu'l ʿIlmiyyah of Qum to have a general publication which would be able to defend the Shīʾa against the ever-growing works that were being published to misguide people.

In addition, people had always expected this from the great Islamic seminaries and there was pressure from different parts of the community, including the supreme religious authorities (marāja-ye taqlīd) of the Ḥawza and others, to publish a magazine that would be able to answer the religious enquiries of the youth and also to counter the books and magazines that were misleading the people.

Due to the fact that at that time, there were some intellectuals who were not ready to accept such a publication, His Eminence sought out serious and resourceful thinkers to shoulder the heavy responsibility of producing such a publication. In this regard, His Eminence, along with a group of other scholars and the assistance of the leaders of the Ḥawzatu'l ʿIlmiyyah of Qum and the financial support of well-wishers, launched the magazine, "Maktab-e-Islam". This magazine was unprecedented in the Shīʾa world, and perhaps from the point of view of the range of its circulation, it is one of the leading religious magazines being published in the entire Muslim world. This magazine gave a fresh and new path of direction to the great students and thinkers of the Ḥawzah.

At present, this publication is in its 39th year - offering its valuable services to the Muslim world and the Shīʾa communities. It has found a special spot within the hearts of the youth, the university students, teachers and other learned personalities and has spread the light of Islam and the Shīʿa school of thought from its centre (Qum) to the entire world.

2. Organizing Gatherings to Offer Lessons in Theology and other Religious Teachings: His Eminence felt that the classical works that had been written in the field of Islamic Theology were no longer sufficient with the passing of time, to address modern needs. The

traditional books of theology had been written in a century when the kind of problems we encounter today did not exist. The older books discussed theological issues such as the disputes between the Ashʿarites and the Muʿtazilites and other similar topics, which are no longer applicable today and which have become just of passing interest only.

Due to these facts, His Eminence, once again calling upon his literary talents and abilities, was able to present the subjects of theological and principal beliefs in a novel and unprecedented manner. By organizing theological discussions, he made hundreds of people conversant with these subjects, and he compiled the summaries of these sessions in the form of books.

3. Religious Council for the Protection of the Youth: In addition to sessions on theology, His Eminence organised other classes through which his students were also instructed about the teachings of eight current world religions so that they could engage in debates or correspond with the proponents of these faiths and counter their beliefs and ideologies.

Within a short period of time, these classes were able to produce able students who were well informed in their specialized field of study and today, an elite group of youth within the Ḥawzatu'l ʿIlmiyyah, are busy studying these topics. Furthermore, in order to safeguard the youth from the clutches of corruption, His Eminence formed an organization called the Religious Council for the Protection of the Youth. One of the outcomes of this council was the publication of material that was interesting to the youth, and these quickly became established amongst the youth in the country.

4. Struggles Against Eclectic Tendencies: On one of his trips to the city of Shīrāz, His Eminence noticed that Sūfism had gathered popular support. A group of people requested him to write a book which would outline the principles of the Sūfīs – one that would explain their beliefs in an agreeable and respectful manner. His Eminence, by making use of the resources available to him, wrote

this book in his usual style, and the book was printed in the year 1953 CE with the title, Jalwa-ye Ḥaq (The Manifestation of Truth).

The style in which he wrote this book caught the attention of the late Āyatullāh al-ʿUẓmā Burūjerdī قدس سره and he requested His Eminence to see him and congratulated him for his valuable efforts. In relation to this book, Āyatullāh al-ʿUẓmā Burūjerdī قدس سره made the following commendation, "I have gone through this book in my spare time and did not find even the smallest of weak points in it. May Allāh reward you for your troubles."

5. Establishing Organizations and Centres of Learning: His Eminence had made the intention of establishing such organizations in the same number as the Maʿṣūmīn عليهم السلام, which is 14. By the grace of Allāh, he has thus far been successful in establishing four such important schools within the Theological Seminary of Qum and two religious organizations for the welfare of the students who are living in the city of Mashad.

6. Writings – The number of publications of His Eminence currently lies at approximately 130 books which have all been printed – some of which have been reprinted more than 30 times and others which have been translated into more than 10 languages and have been published in various parts of the world.

The commentary of the Qurʾan authored by him, Tafsīr-e-Namuneh (The Model Commentary) has been translated into many languages, including Arabic (al-Amthāl Fī Tafsīr al-Qurʾan), and can be found in many homes. An English commentary of the Qurʾan entitled, "Light of the Holy Qurʾan" is also currently being published which is largely based on this work. In addition to this commentary, he has also authored a thematic commentary of the Qurʾan entitled, Payām-e-Qurʾan (The Message of the Qurʾan) in ten volumes. These two commentaries have opened up a new chapter in the field of exegesis of the Noble Qurʾan.

One complete course in usūl al-dīn has been covered in the first series of Payām-e-Qurʾan, while the author has recently embarked on a second series covering ethics (akhlāq) in the Qurʾan. The first volume of this commentary has recently been translated into English and will be printed soon by the World Federation of KSIMC, based in the United Kingdom.

In addition, the books he has written on theological beliefs have ably provided a defence for students and scholars against the onslaught of books containing false beliefs and untruths.

Of the books of fiqh that he has written, we can mention the following: Anwār al-Fuqahah, al-Qawāʿidu'l Fiqhiyyah, Anwār al-Uṣūl and the notes and commentaries on the complete text of ʿUrwat al-Wuthqā which have been printed many times over.

His practical guide for Muslims (Tawḍīḥ al-Masāil) has also been printed many times and has also been translated into Arabic, Urdu, Turkish, Azari and English.

A complete list of other publications of this great scholar which have been translated into English and are available is as follows. Most of these can be read on his website at **www.makaremshirazi.org**.

1. Ethical Discourses [40 Lectures on Ethics and Morality] – Volume 1, 2 & 3 translated by Saleem Bhimji – published by the World Federation of KSIMC [www.world-federation.org]

2. Khums: The Islamic Tax translated by Saleem Bhimji – published by the Islamic Humanitarian Service [www.al-haqq.com]

3. Lessons in Islamic Beliefs – Tawḥīd, ʿAdālah, Nubuwwah, Imamah, and Maʿād translated by Laleh Bakhtiyar – published by Ansariyan Publications [www.ansariyan.org]

4. Life Under the Grace of Ethics translated by Monir Shafiei - published by the Office of Āyatullāh Makarim Shirazi [www.makaremshirazi.org]

5. Message of the Qurʾan – A Thematic Exegesis of the Noble Qurʾan Volume 1 of 10 translated by Saleem Bhimji - published by the World Federation of KSIMC [www.world-federation.org]

6. One Hundred and Eighty Questions – Volumes 1, 2 & 3 translated by Shahnawaz Mahdavi - published by the World Federation of KSIMC [www.world-federation.org]

7. One Hundred and Fifty Lessons for Life translated by the office of Āyatullāh al-ʿUẓmā Shaykh Nāṣir Makārim Shīrāzī – published by Ansariyan Publications [www.ansariyan.org]

8. Our Beliefs translated by the office of Āyatullāh al-ʿUẓmā Shaykh Nāṣir Makārim Shīrāzī - published by the Office of Āyatullāh Makarim Shirazi [www.makaremshirazi.org]

9. Philosophy of Islamic Rulings written in co-operation with Āyatullāh Ja'far Subḥānī Translated by Sayyid Athar Rizvi – published by Ansariyan Publications [www.ansariyan.org]

10. Summary of the Islamic Rulings translated by ʿAlī Abdul Rasheed - published by the Office of Āyatullāh Makarim Shirazi [www.makaremshirazi.org]

11. Tafsīr of the Noble Qur'an – Sūratul Jinn translated by Saleem Bhimji – published by the Islamic Humanitarian Service and the World Federation of KSIMC [www.al-haqq.com] & [www.world-federation.org]

12. The Ḥadīth of Ghadir – The Expressive Evidence for Imamate translated by the office of Āyatullāh al-ʿUẓmā Shaykh Nāṣir Makārim Shīrāzī - published by the Office of Āyatullāh Makarim Shirazi [www.makaremshirazi.org]

13. The Noble Qurʿan – Translation and Commentary – Volume 1 translated by Mansoor Amini - published by the Office of Āyatullāh Makarim Shirazi [www.makaremshirazi.org]

14. The Noble Qurʾan – Translation and Commentary – Volume 2 translated by Mansoor Amini - published by the Office of Āyatullāh Makarim Shirazi [www.makaremshirazi.org]

15. The Noble Qurʾan – Translation and Commentary – Volume 3 translated by Mansoor Amini - published by the Office of Āyatullāh Makarim Shirazi [www.makaremshirazi.org]

16. The Noble Qurʾan – Translation and Commentary – Volume 4 translated by Mansoor Amini - published by the Office of Āyatullāh Makarim Shirazi [www.makaremshirazi.org]

17. The Islamic Laws translated by the office of Āyatullāh al-ʿUẓmā Shaykh Nāṣir Makārim Shīrāzī - published by the Office of Āyatullāh Makarim Shirazi [www.makaremshirazi.org]

INTRODUCTION

THROUGHOUT THE AGES, distinguished Shiʿite scholars have authored numerous commentaries, some of which have been a source of benefit for the scholars, the Ḥawza ʿIlmiyyah and those who have been attracted to the Qurʾan. However there was demand for a commentary possessing the excellences of Tafsīr-e-Namunah, in the Persian language, especially in this period of time wherein there is an ever-increasing focus towards comprehending the Noble Qurʾan.

Āyatullāh al-ʿUẓmā Makārim Shīrāzī, with the co-operation of some distinguished scholars, has fulfilled this requirement and done an invaluable service to the Noble Qurʾan by authoring this valuable commentary

Some of the features of this commentary, which have contributed to its extra-ordinary universality and attraction, are as follows:

1. Although this commentary is in Persian, its scientific and research aspects have been given such consideration and emphasis that it benefits not only the common masses, who are interested in comprehending the Qurʾan, but also scholars and men of learning.

2. While interpreting the verses, rather than dwelling on unnecessary points, particular attention has been paid to those important issues that could have a great impact upon the lives of individuals and the society.

3. In connection with the topics that are propounded in the verses, separate and succinct discussions have been presented in this commentary in such a manner that a brief study of these would make the reader independent of the need to refer to other books on these topics.

4. The use of intricate terminology has been avoided; nevertheless, whenever necessary, explanations have been provided in the footnotes so that in addition to scholars and people of learning, this commentary is also useful for the general public.

5. One of the important distinctions of this commentary is that it presents solutions for present-day issues, and answers for various kinds of questions and objections pertaining to the Uṣul and Furūʿ of religion, and Islamic sciences and culture.

In view of these salient features, we sought permission from the reverend teacher for collecting the questions and answers separately, and presenting them before the general public, especially the dear youths. Fortunately, he responded positively to our request and so, with the co-operation of friends, Ḥujjaj al-Islam Aḥmad Jaʿfarī, Sayyid ʿAlī Riḍā Jaʿfarī, Sayyid Murtaḍā Mūsawī, Sayyid Asghar Ḥusainī and Muḥammad Ḥusain Muḥammadī, the entire Tafsīr-e-Namunah and the subjective commentary Payām-e-Qurʾan were subjected to a detailed and meticulous study. All the instances were extracted and this book, containing 180 questions and answers, was then organized.

At this juncture it is necessary to mention a few points:

1. At times, answers to certain questions have been presented in various places in the commentaries (Tafsīr-e-Namunah and Payām-e-Qurʾan) and so all the instances were collected and correlated in a special manner, and mentioned in one place in this book.

2. In this collection care has been exercised to refrain from presenting questions pertaining to the commentary of the verses. This is because our objective was to compile those questions that are propounded in our religious society and not questions relating to the commentary of the verses – for the answers to the latter can be obtained only after a study of the entire commentary.

3. It may be questioned: 'Is this collection not a repetition of the book 'Pursish-ha Wa Pasukh-hae Madhhabi', authored by the reverend teacher and Āyatullāh Subḥānī?' In this regard it should be known that there are only 30 questions that are common to both of them.

4. Although the compilation of this book may appear to have been a simple task, however the various stages of the work, whether it be the studying of the commentaries, the extraction of the questions and answers, the arrangement and organisation of the repeated portions... demanded a great deal of time.

5. From the entire collection of 180 questions and answers, 143 questions are from Tafsīr-e-Namunah, 35 from the commentary Payām-e-Qurʾan, one from Payām-e-Imam (the commentary on Nahjul Balāghah by the reverend teacher) and one from the book Āfaridegar-e-Jihān (a collection of the reverend teacher's lectures). It is hoped that this insignificant service finds acceptance by Ḥaḍrat Baqīyatullāh - May our souls be his ransom.

Sayyid Ḥusaīn Ḥusaīnī

180 QUESTIONS – PART I
THE BRANCHES OF RELIGION

THE PRAYERS

1. What is the philosophy behind Wuḍū[1] and Ghusl[2]?

Undoubtedly, Wuḍū possesses two manifest benefits - the medical benefit and the ethical and spiritual one. From the medical point of view, washing of the face and hands five times a day or at the very least, three times a day, has an appreciable influence as far as the cleanliness of the body is concerned. Wiping the head and the exterior portion of the feet - the condition here being that the water reaches the hair and the skin - means that we keep these portions clean too. We shall allude later when discussing the philosophy of ghusl, that the contact of water with skin has a special effect in achieving the equilibrium of the sympathetic and parasympathetic nerves of the body.

As for the ethical and spiritual aspect, since it is performed for Allāh and with the intention of pleasing Him, it possesses an educative influence; especially since its implicit meaning - from head to toe I strive to obey You - serves to corroborate this ethical and spiritual philosophy.

In a tradition, Imam ʿAlī b. Mūsā al-Riḍā عليه السلام says: “The reason why the order for (the performance of) Wuḍū has been issued, and (the reason) why the acts of worship should commence by it is that when the servants stand before Allāh and converse with Him, they should be clean, away from uncleanness and pollution, and act in

[1] Minor ritual ablution (Tr.)
[2] Major ritual ablution (Tr.)

accordance with His orders. Apart from this, Wuḍū eliminates drowsiness and lethargy from man so that the heart can acquire the purity and luminosity for standing in the presence of Allāh."[3]

When we explain the philosophy of ghusl, the philosophy of Wuḍū should become more clear.

PHILOSOPHY OF GHUSL

Some people question: Why does Islam order a person in the state of 'janābat'[4] to wash his entire body whereas it is only a particular organ that becomes unclean? Is there a difference between urinal emission and seminal discharge so as to necessitate the washing of only the organ, in the former, but the entire body, in the latter?

There are two answers to this question - one brief and the other comprehensive.

The brief answer is that the discharge of semen from the human body is not an act that is restricted to just one part of the body (unlike urine and other body wastes), a claim which is substantiated by the fact that the effect of the discharge becomes manifest on the entire body. Subsequent to a discharge, all the cells of the body slip into a characteristic lethargy; which is an indication of its effect on all the parts of the body.

EXPLANATION

Studies conducted by scientists reveal that within the human body there exist two vegetative nervous networks which control and regulate all the activities of the body. These two nervous networks - the sympathetic nerves and the parasympathetic nerves - are spread out throughout the body and around all the internal and external systems and tracts. The function of the sympathetic nerves is to accelerate and stimulate the activities of the various tracts of the body, whereas the parasympathetic nerves function to

[3] *Wasā'il ash-Shī'a*, vol. 1, pg. 257
[4] Ceremonial uncleanness (Tr.)

decelerate and diminish them. In effect, one plays the role of the accelerator of an automobile while the other plays the role of the brakes; with a balanced functioning of these two sets of nerves, the systems of the body work in a balanced and normal manner.

At times certain occurrences in the body disrupt this balance and equilibrium - one of these being the issue of ‘orgasm’, which is usually contemporaneous with a seminal discharge.

In such cases, the parasympathetic nerves (the decelerating nerves) tend to take a lead over the sympathetic nerves and consequently disrupt the equilibrium, negatively.

It has also been established that amongst the things that could force the sympathetic nerves into activity and re-establish the lost equilibrium is contact of water with the body, and since the effect of orgasm is noticeably felt on all parts of the body and the equilibrium existing between these two sets of nerves is disrupted all over the body, hence it has been ordered that after sexual intercourse or seminal discharge the entire body should be washed with water so that as a result of its regenerative effect, equilibrium is once again established between these two sets of nerves all over the body.[5]

Of course, the benefits of ghusl are not just confined to the above for, in addition to this, it is also a form of worship whose ethical influence cannot be denied. It is for this reason that if the body is washed without the intention of seeking His pleasure and in compliance with His orders, the ghusl would be deemed to be incorrect. In reality, seminal discharge or sexual intercourse tends to affect the soul as well as the body - the soul gets drawn towards material pleasures, while the body is overcome by listlessness and

5 The tradition of Imām ʿAlī Ibn Mūsā al-Riḍā ﷺ probably alludes to this issue when it states:

لِأَنَّ الْجَنَابَةَ خَارِجَةٌ مِنْ كُلِّ جَسَدِهِ فَلِذٰلِكَ وَجَبَ عَلَيْهِ تَطْهِيرُ جَسَدِهِ كُلِّهِ.

“The ‘janabat’ comes out from his entire body and hence it is obligatory for him to wash his entire body.” *Wasāʾil ash-Shīʿa*, vol. 1, pg. 466

stagnation. The ghusl of janābat, which is a washing of the body and also of the soul (due to its being performed in compliance with Allāh's orders and with the intention of seeking His pleasure), exercises a two-fold effect upon the soul and the body - leading the soul towards Allāh and spirituality while at the same time leading the body towards cleanliness, liveliness and activity.

In addition to the above, the obligation of the ghusl of janābat is an Islamic compulsion for maintaining cleanliness of the body and observance of hygiene throughout the life. There are numerous individuals, who are neglectful of their cleanliness and hygiene, but this Islamic ruling forces them to wash themselves at regular intervals and keep themselves clean. This is not specific to the people of the past eras, for even in our times there are numerous such individuals, who, for various reasons, tend to be neglectful of their cleanliness and hygiene (however, this is a general and universal rule which includes even one who has recently washed his body).

The abovementioned three aspects clearly illustrate why the ghusl ought to be performed and the entire body washed after a seminal discharge (sleeping or awake) and similarly, after sexual intercourse (even if not accompanied by a seminal discharge).

2. What is the philosophy behind Tayammum[6]?

Numerous people question as to what benefit could the hitting of hands upon the earth and then wiping them over the forehead and the back of the hands possibly possess, especially in the light of our knowledge that very many kinds of soil are dirty, polluted and a medium for the transfer of microbes?

In answering such objections, attention ought to be paid to two points:

1. The Ethical Benefit: Tayammum is one of the acts of worship in which the 'soul' of worship - in the true meaning of the word -

[6] Ablution with earth (Tr.)

becomes manifest. This is because man wipes his forehead, which is the most honourable portion of his body, by means of his hands that have been struck upon the earth in order to exhibit his humbleness and humility towards his Lord as if to say: My forehead and my hands are totally humble and subservient in Your presence - after which, he proceeds to engage himself in prayers or other acts of worship that require Wuḍū or ghusl. This, in itself, has a great effect in developing within the people a spirit of humility, subservience and thanksgiving.

2. The Sanitary Benefit: Today, it has been established that soil, due to its containing numerous bacteria, is able to do away with contamination and pollution. These bacteria, whose work is to decompose organic substances and eliminate various kinds of infections, are generally located, in numerous numbers, on the surface of the earth or at less depths, where they are better able to benefit from the air and sunlight. It is for this reason that an animal carcass or a human body - when buried after death, and similarly polluted matter that is on the surface of the earth - get decomposed in a comparatively short period, and in the face of bacterial attack, the infection gets destroyed. Surely, if the soil were not to have possessed such a characteristic, the entire planet, in a short period, would have transformed into a centre of infection. Essentially, soil possesses a property that is similar to an antibiotic and is extraordinarily effective in eliminating microbes.

Thus, pure soil is not only uncontaminated but instead, serves to eliminate contamination and in this respect it can, to a certain extent, be a substitute for water - the difference being that water is the dissolver, meaning that it dissolves the bacteria and carries it with itself whereas soil eliminates the microbes.

But it ought to be noted that the earth for tayammum should always be pure (ṭāhir), just as the Qurʾan employing an interesting expression[7] says: طَيِّبا[8]

Interestingly, the use of the word صَعِيْد[9], which has been derived from the root صُعُوْد[10], is an allusion to the fact that it is better to use the soil lying on the surface of the ground for this purpose - the same soil, which receives the air and the sunshine, and contains the microbe-killing bacteria. If such a soil also happens to be pure, then tayammum by means of it shall possess the above benefits without carrying the slightest of detriment.[11]

3. What is the manner of washing the face, and wiping the head and the feet in Wuḍū?

Verse number 6 of Sūratul Māidah makes a mention of all those things that bring about the purification of man's soul and hence, a considerable portion of the rulings associated with Wuḍū, ghusl and tayammum, which bring about purification of the soul, have been explained therein. Initially the believers are addressed and the rulings related to Wuḍū, are mentioned as follows:

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا قُمْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلاَةِ فَاغْسِلُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ وَ أَيْدِيَكُمْ إِلَى الْمَرافِقِ وَ امْسَحُوا بِرُؤُسِكُمْ وَ أَرْجُلَكُمْ إِلَى الْكَعْبَيْنِ ﴾

"O you who believe! When you rise up to prayer, wash your faces and your hands as far as the elbows, and wipe your heads and your feet to the ankles."

7 *Sūratul Māidah* (5), Verse 6; فَتَيَمَّمُوا صَعِيداً طَيِّباً (Tr.)
8 Pure (Tr.)
9 Earth. (Tr.)
10 Rising or ascending (Tr.)
11 *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 3, pg. 400

In this verse the portion of the hand that ought to be washed during Wuḍū has been mentioned, since مَرَافِق is the plural of مِرْفَق – meaning elbow. Since it is possible that when it is said "wash your hands", it could be thought that they should be washed till the wrists - as this is the measure that is generally washed - the verse, in order to do away with this misconception, specifies 'as far as the elbows' (إِلَى الْمَرافِقِ).

From the above explanation it becomes clear that the word إِلَى in the verse is only for mentioning the limits of washing and not the manner of washing as some have imagined – having taken the verse to mean: Wash the hands from the tips of the fingers towards the elbows (as is prevalent amongst a group from amongst the Ahlus Sunnah).

The above issue is similar to the case when a person instructs a worker to paint the walls of a room from the floor up to a height of one meter. It is plainly evident that it is not intended that the wall should be painted from the bottom towards the top – rather, it means that this is the portion that has to be painted - neither more nor less.

Hence, only the extent that needs to be necessarily washed has been mentioned in the verse; however, as far as the manner of washing is concerned, it has been mentioned in the traditions of the Noble Prophet ﷺ that have reached us by means of the Ahlul Bayt ؑ, and it is to wash the hands from the elbows towards the fingertips.

The letter (ب), which is found in the word (بِرُؤُسِكُمْ) - according to the explicit statements of some of the traditions and clear opinions of some of the lexicographers - is used to denote 'a part' (or portion) - as such the meaning conveyed by the verse is: 'Wipe a portion of your heads' which, in our traditions, has been delineated as the anterior one-fourth region of the head and this one-fourth portion ought to be wiped with the hand, however small be the measure of wiping.

It follows that the practice which is prevalent amongst some of the Sunni groups, who wipe their entire heads and even their ears, is inconsistent with the meaning conveyed by the verse.

The word أَرْجُلَكُمْ being located next to بِرُؤُسِكُمْ is a testimony to the fact that the legs should also be wiped and not washed. (And if we observe that during recitation, أَرْجُلَكُمْ is recited such that (ل) possesses the fathah (the vowel point for 'a'), this is due to it being superimposed upon the place of بِرُؤُسِكُمْ and not on the word وُجُوهَكُمْ.)[12 and 13]

4. What is the need to face the Qiblah in prayers?

Verse number 115 of Sūratul Baqarah states:

﴿ وَ لِلّٰهِ الْمَشْرِقُ وَ الْمَغْرِبُ فَأَيْنَمَا تُوَلُّوا فَثَمَّ وَجْهُ اللّٰهِ ﴾

"To Allāh belong the east and the West: Whithersoever ye turn, there is the presence of Allāh."

In consideration of the above verse the question that comes to mind is: If Allāh is present wherever we face, what then is the need to face the Qiblah (during the prayers)?

(The order for) facing the Qiblah is not at all intended to confine the presence of the Holy Allāh in a particular direction. However, since man is a material entity and thus, must necessarily face a direction while offering his prayers, it has been ruled that all should face one particular direction during their prayers. This is with the objective of realizing unity and harmony amongst the Muslims, and preventing confusion, disorder and scattering amongst them. Just reflect how scathing and disorderly it would be if each person were

[12] There is no doubt that there exists a comparatively great separation between وُجُوهَكُمْ and أَرْجُلَكُمْ making the superimposition upon it to appear remote. Apart from this, a great number of Qur'an reciters have also recited the word أَرْجُلَكُمْ with (ل) possessing the *kasrah* (the vowel point for 'i').

[13] *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 4, pg. 285

to offer his prayers in a different direction and the people were to establish scattered rows (for the prayers)?

Incidentally, the direction that has been stipulated as the Qiblah (the direction towards the Kaʿbah) is a region that is not only holy but also one of the most ancient bases of monotheism and so, directing oneself towards it serves to awaken the monotheistic reminiscences (within oneself).[14]

5. What secrets lay behind the changing of the Qiblah?

The change of Qiblah from Bayt al-Maqdas to the holy Kaʿbah was a puzzle for everyone; those who were of the opinion that every rule ought to be permanent and unchanging, mused: If we had to necessarily pray in the direction of the Kaʿbah, why was it not ordered from the very onset? If Bayt al-Maqdas, which had been regarded as the Qiblah for the previous prophets was superior, why then was it changed?

The enemies too found the issue a fertile ground to poison the minds of the people. They probably might have said: At the start he ﷺ turned towards the Qiblah of the previous prophets but after tasting victories he was overcome by racial and nationalistic tendencies and therefore substituted it with the Qiblah of his own people!

Or they might have said: He initially accepted Bayt al-Maqdas to be his Qiblah in order to attract the Jews and the Christians towards his religion, but later, when he observed that it did not prove effective, he changed it to the Kaʿbah.

The agitation and commotion that these whisperings must have generated - especially in a society in which the sediments of the eras of idolatry and polytheism still existed, and one that had yet to be completely illuminated by the light of knowledge, science, and faith - is all too evident.

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[14] *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 1, pg. 415

As a result, the Qurʾan explicitly states in verse 143 of Sūratul Baqarah that this was a great trial to discern the stance adopted by the believers and the polytheists.

It is not improbable that one of the important reasons for the change in Qiblah could be the following issue:

In that period, since the Kaʿbah had been the hub for the idols of the polytheists it was ordered that the Muslims should temporarily offer their prayers in the direction of Bayt al-Maqdas and in this way separate their ranks and disassociate themselves from the polytheists. But when they emigrated to Madinah and established their own community and rule, and when their ranks were completely demarcated from that of the others, it was not necessary to continue with the existing posture and hence they returned towards the holy Kaʿbah, the most ancient focal point of the prophets and the centre of monotheism.

It is plainly evident that offering prayers in the direction of Bayt al-Maqdas was very difficult for those, who regarded the Kaʿbah to be the spiritual edifice of their own tribe, and equally difficult was the return towards the Kaʿbah, after having become habituated to the first Qiblah.

In this manner the believers were placed in a crucible of examination in order that the traces of polytheism, which still existed within themselves, get burnt away in the hot furnace of this test, they sever their association with their polytheistic past, and there develops within them the spirit of absolute submission before the orders of Allāh.

Basically, just as we have previously mentioned, Allāh does not possess any place or location; the Qiblah is just a code for establishing unity within the ranks of the believers and reviving the reminiscences of monotheism and so, changing it would not transform anything. The important thing is to submit to His

commands and shatter the idols of fanaticism, stubbornness and egotism.[15]

6. What is the philosophy of prayers?

In Sūratul ʿAnkabut, verse number 45, mentions an important philosophy with respect to the prayers when it says:

﴿ إِنَّ الصَّلاَةَ تَنْهىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَ الْمُنْكَرِ ﴾

"Surely prayer keeps (one) away from indecency and evil."

Since prayers remind man of two of the most powerful deterrents - the Origin and the Resurrection – it thus possesses a deterring influence with regards to indecency and evil.

A person, who stands up for prayers, recites Allāhu Akbar and regards Allāh to be superior to and greater than everything else. Recollecting His bounties, he praises Him and offers his thanksgiving. He eulogizes Him for His Compassion and Mercy, and brings to mind the Day of Judgment; professing his servitude, he yearns for His help, seeks the Straight Path from Him and implores Him to protect him from treading the path of the deviated ones and those, who earn His anger (the theme of Sūratul Ḥamd).

Undoubtedly, the heart and the soul of such a person shall experience an impulse towards truth, purity and piety.

He goes into rukūʿ for Allāh and places his forehead on the ground in His august presence. Drowned in His grandeur, he shoves his egoism and superiority complex into oblivion.

He testifies to His Unity and the prophethood of the Noble Prophet ﷺ.

He sends salutations upon the Noble Prophet ﷺ and beseeches Allāh to place him amongst His righteous servants (tashahhud and salām).

[15] *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 1, pg. 485

All these acts create within him a tidal wave of spirituality, which is reckoned to be a strong barrier against sins.

This act is repeated several times in a day; when he rises up in the morning he gets immersed in His remembrance; in the middle of the day when he is totally engrossed in the material life he suddenly hears the muezzin calling the people to prayers. Interrupting his schedule he hastens to present himself before Him. Even at the end of the day and before sliding into the relaxing comforts of his bed he engages himself in a communion with his Lord, illuminating his heart with His Light.

In addition to the above, as he engages himself in the preliminaries of the prayers, he washes and cleans himself and keeps away usurped and forbidden things from himself after which he proceeds to present himself before his Friend. All these things effectively serve as a deterrent, preventing him from treading the path of indecency and evil.

But ultimately, every prayer shall only keep one away from evil and indecency in the same measure as the conditions of perfection and the spirit of worship, which it happens to possess. At times it keeps one away from evil, completely and wholly, whereas at other times it does so partially and incompletely.

It is impossible that a person offers his prayers but they do not have any effect on him - however superficial the prayer and however polluted the person. Obviously, the effects of such prayers are less, but had such individuals not been offering these prayers, they might have been in a much more polluted state.

Stating this more clearly, ‘refraining from indecency and evil’ possesses numerous levels and ranks, and every prayer, depending upon the conditions of the prayers that have been taken into consideration (while offering it), possesses some of these ranks

It has been reported in a tradition that a youth from the Anṣār (Helpers) used to offer his prayers with the Noble Prophet ﷺ, but

despite this, he was prone to committing sins and evil deeds. When this was brought to the notice of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, he said:

إِنَّ صَلاَتَهُ تَنْهاهُ يَوْماً.

"His prayers deter him for one day (only)."[16]

This effect of the prayers is so significant that some of the traditions refer to it as a gauge for distinguishing the accepted prayers from those that that are not. As Imam as-Ṣādiq عليه السلام said:

مَنْ أَحَبَّ أَنْ يَعْلَمَ أَ قُبِلَتْ صَلاَتُهُ أَمْ لَمْ تُقْبَلْ فَلْيَنْظُرْ هَلْ مَنَعَتْهُ صَلاَتُهُ عَنِ الْفَحْشَآءِ وَ الْمُنْكَرِ فَبِقَدْرِ مَا مَنَعَتْهُ قُبِلَتْ مِنْهُ.

"One, who desires to know if his prayer has been accepted or not, should observe if it has kept him away from indecency and evil, or not; the measure in which it has kept him away (is the measure of his prayer that) has been accepted."[17]

Continuing with the verse, Allāh says:

﴿ وَ لَذِكْرُ اللّٰهِ أَكْبَرُ ﴾

"The dhikr (remembrance) of Allāh is superior and more virtuous."

The apparent meaning of the above sentence appears to mention a more important philosophy for the prayers. It mentions another effect of prayers - an effect that is even more important than 'keeping one away from indecency and evil' - and that is, it causes man to remember Allāh – this being the basis of every goodness and the foundation of all felicities. In reality, its superiority and importance is due to the fact that it is the cause for it (keeping one away from indecency and evil).

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[16] *Majmaʿ al-Bayān*, under the discussion regarding verse 45 of Sūratul ʿAnkabūt.
[17] Ibid.

Basically, remembrance of Allāh keeps the hearts alive and sets them at rest, and no other thing can be likened to it in significance and importance.

﴿ أَلاَ بِذِكْرِ اللّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ ﴾

"Surely by Allāh's remembrance are the hearts set at rest."[18]

Essentially, the soul of every act of worship - whether it is a prayer or something else - is remembrance of Allāh. The preliminary acts of the prayer, the recitations and actions in it, the supplications after the prayers - all of these – serve to revive the remembrance of Allāh within a man's heart.

Worthy of attention is that an allusion has been made to this fundamental philosophy of prayer in Sūrat Tāhā, when Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام is addressed as:

﴿ أَقِمِ الصَّلاَةَ لِذِكْرِي ﴾

"And keep up prayer for My remembrance."[19]

In a tradition, Muʿādh b. Jabal states: No deed of man, for protecting him from divine chastisement, is greater than 'remembrance of Allāh'. When he was asked: Not even Jihād in the way of Allāh? He replied: No (not even Jihād), for Allāh has said:

﴿ وَ لَذِكْرُ اللّهِ أَكْبَرُ ﴾

Although the philosophy of prayer is not something that is hidden from anyone, a more careful study of the text of the Qurʾan and the traditions guide us towards some more subtle points in this regard:

1. The spirit, foundation, objective, result and ultimately the philosophy of prayers is remembrance of Allāh - the same ذكر الله, which, in the above verse, has been referred to as the optimum

[18] *Sūratul Raʿd* (13), Verse 28
[19] *Sūrat Ṭaha* (20), Verse 14

result. However, it should be a remembrance that brings about 'reflection', and a 'reflection' that leads to 'deeds'. In a tradition Imam as-Ṣādiq ﷤, interpreting the sentence:

﴿ وَ لَذِكْرُ اللّٰهِ أَكْبَرُ ﴾

said:

ذِكْرُ اللّٰهِ عِنْدَ مَا أَحَلَّ وَ حَرَّمَ.

"Remembrance of Allāh at the time of performing a lawful or a forbidden act."[20]

It means to remember Allāh and seek that which is permitted and refrain from that which is forbidden.

2. Prayers are a means for washing away the sins and achieving divine forgiveness since they invite man towards repentance and rectification of the past. Hence we read in a tradition that once the Noble Prophet ﷺ questioned his companions: If there flowed, at the doorstep of one of your houses, a river with pure and clean water and if the owner happened to wash himself in it five times a day, would there be any dirt or uncleanness on his body? The companions replied: No. The Noble Prophet ﷺ then said: The prayer is similar to this flowing water. Whenever one offers a prayer, the sins committed between two prayers get washed away.[21]

Thus, by means of the balm of prayers, the wounds that get inflicted upon man's soul as a result of sins get healed and the rust that forms on the heart is eliminated.

3. The prayer is a barrier against future sins. It strengthens the spirit of faith within man and fosters the seedling of Taqwā (piety) within his heart. We know that faith and piety are the strongest barriers against sins and this is exactly what has been referred to in

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[20] *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 82, pg. 200

[21] *Wasā'il ash-Shī'a*, vol. 3, pg. 7 (Chapter 2 from The Chapters (regarding) the number of (obligatory) prayers, tradition 3)

the verse as 'keeping one away from indecency and evil'. Similarly, we read in numerous traditions, that when the state of affairs of some sinning individuals was brought to the notice of the Aʾimmah ﴿عليهم السلام﴾, they said: "Don't worry! The prayer shall reform them" and it did!

4. The prayer does away with heedlessness and negligence. The greatest tragedy for those journeying the path of truth is that they tend to forget the purpose of their creation and get drowned in the whirlpool of this material world and its ephemeral pleasures. But the prayer- since it is offered at regular intervals and five times a day - repeatedly warns man and causes him to bring to mind the purpose of his creation and reminds him of his place and position in this world. This, in itself, is a great bounty because man has in his possession a device which alerts him strongly, several times in the course of a day.

5. The prayer serves to shatter pride and egotism. In the course of a day, man offers seventeen rakʿat and in each of them he places his forehead on the ground twice before Allāh, considering himself to be a tiny entity before His greatness - rather, a zero in the presence of Infinity. He tears apart the curtains of arrogance and egotism, and shatters his pride and superiority complex.

We can understand why ʿAlī ﴿عليه السلام﴾, in that popular tradition in which the philosophy behind the various acts of worship of Islam have been explained, immediately after referring to faith, speaks about prayers and explains:

فَرَضَ اللّٰهُ الْإِيْمَانَ تَطْهِيراً مِنَ الشِّرْكِ وَ الصَّلاَةَ تَنْزِيهاً عَنِ الْكِبْرِ.

"Allāh made faith obligatory in order to purify (the people) of polytheism, and the prayer, in order to clean (them) of pride."[22]

6. The prayer is a tool for the development of moral excellences and attaining spiritual perfection. It hauls man out of the limited

[22] *Nahj al-Balāgha*, saying 252

confines of this material world, invites him towards the spiritual realms and places him in the company of the angels. Man, without sensing the need for any intermediary, observes himself in the presence of his Lord and engages in communicating with Him.

The repetition of this act several times in a day with special emphasis on the attributes of Allāh - His Compassion, Mercy and Greatness - especially by way of reciting the various chapters of the Qur'an after Sūratul Ḥamd, which itself is one of the best inviters towards good actions and pure deeds, has an appreciable effect in the development of moral excellences within man.

The Commander of the Faithful ﵇, mentioning the philosophy of the prayers, said:

الصَّلاَةُ قُرْبَانُ كُلِّ تَقِيٍّ.

"The prayer is a means for the pious ones to attain nearness to Allāh."[23]

7. The prayer imparts value and significance to the other deeds of man, since it revives the spirit of sincerity within man. This is because the prayer is a collection of sincere intentions, pure speech and genuine deeds, and a daily repetition of these aspects sows the seeds of other good acts within the soul of man and strengthens the spirit of sincerity within him.

We find that the Commander of the Faithful ﵇, in his testament after being fatally injured on the head by the accursed b. Muljim, said:

اللّٰهَ اللّٰهَ فِي الصَّلاَةِ فَإِنَّهَا عَمُودُ دِينِكُمْ.

"Fear Allāh so far as the prayers are concerned for they are the pillars of your religion."[24]

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[23] Ibid., saying 136
[24] Ibid., letter 47

We know that when the pillars of a tent break down, the ropes and nails that are around it - however strong they may be - are of no use, Similarly, when the connection between the servant and Allāh, which is established by means of prayers, were to get severed the other deeds too would lose their effect.

In a tradition, Imam as-Ṣādiq ﷺ said:

اَوَّلُ مَا يُحَاسَبُ بِهِ الْعُبدُ الصَّلٰوةَ فَإِنْ قُبِلَتْ قُبِلَ سَائِرُ عَمَلِهِ وَ إِنْ رُدَّتْ رُدَّ سائِرُ عَمَلِه.

“The first thing that a servant shall be reckoned for (on the Day of Judgment) shall be his prayers. If they are accepted, all his other deeds shall be accepted too and if they are rejected, the other deeds shall be rejected too!”

Perhaps, the reason for the above could be that the prayer is the key towards establishing a connection between the Creator and the creation, and if offered correctly, would generate within him sincerity and the intention of attaining nearness to Allāh – the two factors that are the means for the acceptance of deeds. But if not, then all his other deeds become tainted, and thus drop from reckoning.

8. The prayer, (not taking into account its contents, for the present) in the light of the conditions necessary for its correctness, invites towards purifying one’s life. It is evident from the requirement that the place where the prayers are offered, the clothes of the person offering the prayers, the carpet upon which the prayers are offered and the water and the place utilized for performing Wuḍū or ghusl should not be usurped or obtained as a result of trampling the rights of others. How can one, who is polluted of transgression, injustice, usury, usurpation, selling short of weight, taking bribes and earning wrongful income, manage to fulfil the preliminary conditions of the prayers? Thus, repetition of prayers, five times a day, is itself an

exhortation towards exhibiting consideration with respect to the rights of others.

9. In addition to the ‘conditions for correctness’, the prayers also have ‘conditions for acceptance’ which, in other words, are referred to as ‘conditions for perfection’; these, if taken into consideration, also act as an effective factor in abandoning many sins.

Books of jurisprudence and traditions mention numerous things that act as impediments towards the acceptance of prayers - one of them being consumption of intoxicants. It has been reported in the traditions that:

لاَ تُقْبَلُ صَلاَةُ شَارِبِ الْخَمْرِ أَرْبَعِينَ يَوْماً إِلاَّ أَنْ يَتُوبَ.

“The prayers of one who consumes intoxicants, shall not be accepted for forty days, except if he repents.”[25]

In several traditions we read that an unjust and oppressive leader is one of those persons, whose prayers are not accepted.[26] Some of the traditions explicitly state that the prayers of one, who does not pay the zakāt, are not accepted; other traditions state that unlawful food, vanity and egotism are of the impediments that prevent one’s prayers from being accepted. The extent of the constructive effect of endeavouring to fulfil these ‘conditions of acceptance’ is only too plain and obvious!

10. Prayers strengthen the spirit of discipline within man since they have to be offered at specific times - any advancement or deferment of which would only serve to render them invalid. Similarly, there also exist rulings with respect to intention, qiyām[27], quʿūd[28], rukuʿ, sujūd and the like, which, if taken into consideration, instill within man a sense of discipline, thereby enabling him to include this factor in the other affairs of his life, with absolute and total ease.

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[25] *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 84, pg. 317 & 320
[26] Ibid., vol. 84, pg. 318
[27] Standing in Ṣalāt. (Tr.)
[28] Sitting in Ṣalāt. (Tr.)

All the above are the merits that exist in individual prayers without taking into account the issue of congregation, for if we are to consider the merits of praying in congregation – which is, in reality, the soul of the prayers - there would be innumerable additional benefits, explanation of which falls beyond the scope of this book but which are more or less known to us.

We conclude this discussion on the philosophy and secrets of prayers by presenting a comprehensive tradition, reported from Imam ʿAlī b. Mūsā al-Riḍā ﷺ.

The Imam ﷺ, replying to a letter in which he was asked about the philosophy of prayers, stated: "The prayers have been legislated for acknowledging and attesting the Lordship of the Lord, combating polytheism and idolatry, standing in His presence with utmost humility and modesty, confessing to one's sins, seeking forgiveness for the past disobediences and placing the forehead on the ground, everyday, for the purpose of glorifying and venerating Him.

It is also intended that man always remains alert, his heart does not get clouded by the dust of forgetfulness, he does not become arrogant and heedless, but instead humble and submissive, and becomes more desirous of worldly and religious bounties.

In addition to this, the regular remembrance of Allāh throughout the day, achieved as a result of prayers, causes man not to become forgetful and heedless of his Lord, Sustainer and Creator, and he is not overcome by the spirit of rebelliousness. It is this attention towards Allāh and standing in His presence that restrains man from disobedience and prevents corruption and depravity."[29 and 30]

7. Why should we offer prayers at prescribed times?

Some people say: "We do not deny the philosophy behind the prayers and nor do we refute its importance or its educative effects, but what is the need for it to be offered at prescribed times? Would

[29] *Wasāʾil ash-Shīʿa*, vol. 3, pg. 4
[30] *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 16, pg. 284

it not be better if the people were left free - each one to perform this obligation as per his leisure and opportunity, and his mental and spiritual preparedness?"

Experience shows that if educative issues are not regulated by means of strict discipline and stipulations, many individuals tend to become forgetful of them and their very foundation becomes shaky and unstable. Such issues ought to be governed by means of strict discipline and specific timings so that no one possesses any excuse for abandoning them. It is particularly so in view of the fact that the performance of these acts at prescribed times and more especially, when performed in a congregation, possesses grandeur, magnificence and effect, which cannot be denied. They are actually a huge lesson for human development.[31]

[31] Ibid., vol. 4, pg. 105

FASTING

8. What is the philosophy of fasting?

There are various aspects associated with fasts and they also possess numerous physical and spiritual benefits. These tend to have a great impact upon man - the most important of them being their ethical aspect and their educative philosophy.

Some of their important benefits are that they make man's soul kind, strengthen his determination and moderate his instincts.

When an individual fasts, despite his hunger and thirst, he must stay away from food, water and sexual pleasures and prove practically that he is not an animal within a stable, but an entity that can rein in his wild soul and overcome his lust and carnal desires.

In fact, the most important philosophy of fasting is this spiritual effect; man, who has a variety of food and drinks at his disposal and can reach out for them the moment he experiences thirst or hunger, is like the trees that grow near the rivers, seeking support of the walls of the gardens. These fondled and pampered trees possess less resistance and are short-lived. If water does not reach them for a few days they immediately dry up and wither away. In contrast, the trees which grow between the rocks on the mountains or in the deserts and which are pampered from their incipience by strong storms, scorching rays of the sun and harsh winters, and are deprived of luxuries, are strong, durable and highly resistant!

Fasts act in a similar way with man's soul, granting it - in exchange for temporary restrictions - a strong determination, steadfastness, and the ability to face up to hardships and severe occurrences. Since it controls the unruly instincts, it makes man's heart pure and luminous.

In short, fasts heave man out of the world of animals and elevate him into the realm of angels, and the expression:

﴿ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴾

"...so that you may guard (against evil)." in verse 183 of Sūratul Baqarah[32], while mentioning the philosophy behind the fasts, also bears an allusion to all of the above realities.

The well-known tradition:

الصَّوْمُ جُنَّةٌ مِنَ النَّارِ.

"The fast is a shield against the fire (of Hell)"[33] is also a reference to this issue.

In another tradition from Imam ʿAlī ﷣ we read that some companions asked the Noble Prophet ﷺ: "What should we do to keep the Satan away from us?" He ﷺ replied: "Fasting blackens the face of the Satan; charity in the way of Allāh breaks his back; befriending someone for the sake of Allāh and persevering in performing good deeds cuts his roots and seeking forgiveness severs the vein of his heart."[34]

In Nahjul Balāgha, while explaining the philosophy of the various acts of worship, the Commander of the Faithful ﷣, says regarding fasting:

وَ الصِّيَامَ ابْتِلاَءً لِإِخْلاَصِ الْخَلْقِ.

"Allāh ordered the observance of fasts for fostering (the attribute of) sincerity within the people)."[35]

In another tradition of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, we read:

[32] يا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيامُ كَما كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ (Tr.)

[33] *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 96, Verse 256

[34] Ibid., pg. 255

[35] *Nahj al-Balāgha*, saying 252

إِنَّ لِلْجَنَّةِ بَاباً يُدْعَىٰ الرَّيَّانَ لاَ يَدْخُلُ مِنْهُ إِلاَّ الصَّائِمُونَ.

"Paradise has a door by the name of 'Rayyān' (the sated one) and none shall enter Paradise through it except those who fast."

The late Sheikh Ṣadūq, explaining this tradition in his book Maʿānī al-Akhbār, says: "The reason for selecting this particular name for this door of Paradise is that the maximum inconvenience suffered by people who fast is caused by thirst; when they pass through this door, they shall be quenched in a manner that they shall never experience any thirst ever again."[36]

THE SOCIAL EFFECTS OF FASTING

The social effects of fasts are evident. Fasts impart the message of equality amongst the individuals of the society. By acting upon this religious obligation the affluent ones not only get first hand experience of the hunger of the hungry and the impoverished ones of society, but economizing on their daily food also serves to benefit them.

Yes, it is possible to draw the attention of the affluent ones towards the state of the hungry and the deprived ones by describing their conditions to them, but if this aspect were to be experienced physically, the effects would be all the more noticeable. The fasts provide a personal experience to this important social issue. It is for this reason that it has been narrated that when Hishām b. Ḥakam sought to know the reason for the legislation of fasting, Imam as-Ṣādiq ﷺ replied: "Fasting has been made obligatory in order to establish equality between the rich and the poor; the rich experience the pangs of hunger and thus fulfil their obligations with respect to the poor. Usually, the rich can attain whatever they covet; Allāh desires that there exists equality between His servants

[36] *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 96, pg. 252

thereby making the rich experience hunger, pain and trouble so that they may exhibit mercy upon the hungry and the destitute."[37]

If the wealthy nations of the world were to fast for just a few days in the year and experience the pangs of hunger, would there still exist any hungry people in the world?

THE MEDICAL AND CURING EFFECTS OF FASTING

The miraculous effect of abstinence (from food) in curing various diseases has been established in modern as well as ancient medicine. It is a fact which just cannot be denied and one would be hard pressed to find a doctor who does not refer to this fact in the course of his writings. We all know that the cause of a great number of diseases is extravagance in the consumption of various types of food. This is because the unabsorbed components either accumulate in the form of obtrusive fat particles at various locations within the body, or remain within the blood stream as fat and surplus sugar. These superfluous components, between the muscles of the body, are in fact the perfect breeding grounds for microbes and infectious diseases. In this state, the best way to combat these diseases is to do away with these breeding grounds by means of abstinence (from food) and fasting! Fasting burns away the refuse and thus cleanses the body.

In addition, it also provides a noticeable and vital respite to the digestive system and serves as an effective factor in tuning-up this process, especially in the light of the fact that this structure is the most sensitive of all the systems of the body and one which is in a state of continuous operation all throughout the year.

It is clear that, as taught by Islam, the one who fasts should not exhibit extravagance in consuming food during sahar[38] and ifṭār[39],

[37] *Wasā'il ash-Shī'a*, vol. 7, the first chapter of The Book of Fasts, pg. 3
[38] The time before beginning the fast. (Tr.)
[39] The time of breaking the fast. (Tr.)

in order that he derives the maximum benefit medically, otherwise, it is possible that the results might have a negative effect.

Alexis Sophorin, the Russian scientist, writes in his book: "Treatment by means of fasting possesses special benefits and is useful for curing anaemia, weakness of the intestines, acute and chronic inflammation, internal and external abscesses, tuberculosis, sclerosis, rheumatism, gout, dropsy, sciatica, (peeling of the skin), diseases of the eyes, sugar disorders, skin diseases, kidney and liver problems, and other diseases."

The abovementioned diseases are not the only ones that can be treated by means of abstinence of food, rather diseases that are associated with the very foundation of the body and are intertwined with its very cells, such as cancer, syphilis, tuberculosis and plague can also be treated by this means.[40]

In a well-known tradition, the Noble Prophet ﷺ says:

تَصُومُوا تَصِحُّوا.

"Fast, in order that you become healthy."[41]

In another well-known tradition, he ﷺ says:

أَلْمِعْدَةُ بَيْتُ كَلِّ داَءٍ وَ الْحَمِيَّةُ رَأْسُ كُلِّ دَواَءٍ.

"The stomach is the house of all maladies and abstinence (from food) is the best of all cures."[42 and 43]

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[40] Ruzeh: Rawish-e-Nuween Baraai Darmaan-e-Bimaarihaa, pg. 65 (First edition)
[41] *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 96, pg. 255
[42] Ibid., vol. 14
[43] *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 1, pg. 628

KHUMS

9. Is allocation of one half of Khums for the Bani Hāshim not favouritism?

Some people are of the impression that this Islamic tax, which covers twenty percent of most wealth and one half of which has been apportioned for the sādāt[44], is a kind of familial distinction and smells of nepotism and favouritism - an aspect that is incongruous with the universal nature of Islam and it's spirit of social justice.

Those who harbour such views have not studied the conditions and specifics of this ruling completely, for the answer to this objection, in it's entirety, lies in them.

Firstly, one half of the khums associated with the descendants of the Noble Prophet ﷺ and the Banī Hāshim must be given exclusively to the impoverished ones from amongst them and that too, only in the measure sufficient to fulfil their needs for one year (not more)! Thus, the only ones who can utilize it are those, who are either sick and cannot work, or infant orphans and those who, due to certain reasons, cannot make both ends meet.

Therefore, those who are capable of working (in actuality or in potential) and are able to procure an earning, sufficient for leading their lives, do not have the right to make use of this portion of the khums. It follows that the commonly held view among the general masses that the descendants of the Noble Prophet ﷺ can utilize khums, however well off they might be, is improper and totally baseless and unfounded.

Secondly, the impoverished and the underprivileged ones from amongst the sādāt and the Banī Hāshim do not have the right to use zakāt; instead they can only utilize this portion of khums.[45]

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[44] Descendants of the noble Prophet ﷺ (Tr.)

[45] The fact that the Banī Hāshim have been forbidden from taking the Zakāt is incontrovertible and this is an issue, which has been mentioned in numerous books of tradition and jurisprudence. Is it possible for us to believe that while

Thirdly, if the share of the sādāt, which is one half of the khums, happens to exceed the needs of the sādāt actually present, this surplus should be put into the public treasury to be put to other uses. On the contrary, if that portion is insufficient to fulfil their requirements then they must be provided for, either from the public treasury or from the zakāt.

In view of the above three points it is quite clear that no differentiation has been exhibited between the sādāt and the non-sādāt, materially.

The needy non-sādāt can procure their yearly expenses from zakāt but are deprived of khums, whereas the indigent sādāt can procure theirs from khums but, in turn, remain deprived from zakāt.

In fact, there exist two coffers; the 'coffer of khums' and the 'coffer of zakāt'. Each of these two groups has the right to utilize the contents of only one of these two coffers, and that too, equally – that is, one year's requirements only.

But those people who have not reflected over these conditions and details, are given to imagine that the sādāt have been allotted a greater share from the public treasury or that they enjoy a special distinction.

The only question that looms up here is that if there is no difference between the two, as far as the outcome is concerned, what is the benefit of such a classification?

The answer to this can be comprehended by taking one important point into consideration and that is, there exists an important fundamental difference between khums and zakāt; zakāt is considered to be of the taxes that are regarded as part of the general funds of the Islamic society and hence it is essentially utilized in this sector, whereas khums is of the taxes appertaining to the Islamic

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Islam has made arrangements for the orphans and the incapable and impoverished ones of the non-Banī Hāshim, it has left the Banī Hāshim without any security - unattended and unlooked after?

Government - that is, the expenses of the Islamic Government and its functionaries are paid from it.

Thus, keeping the sādāt deprived of the general funds (zakāt) is in fact with the objective of keeping the relatives of the Noble Prophet ﷺ away from these funds. Otherwise, the Noble Prophet ﷺ[46] would be accused of placing his relatives in control of the general funds.

But on the other hand, as the needy and the impoverished sādāt do need to be looked after too, it has been stipulated in the Islamic Laws that they would be supported from the funds of the Islamic Government and not from the general funds.

Thus, in reality, not only is khums not a distinction for the sādāt, but on the contrary, it is a means to sideline them in view of the general interest and to prevent the arousal of any kind of suspicion and mistrust.[47]

[46] And if we notice that some of the traditions state:

كَرَامَةً لَهُم عَنْ أَوساَخِ النَّاسِ.

The objective is to keep the sādāt away from Zakāt, since it is reckoned to be a kind of filth of the people's wealth) it is for the purpose of appeasing and placating the Banī Hāshim over this prohibition (of utilizing the Zakāt) and also for explaining to the people that they should desist from being a burden upon the public treasury, unless absolutely necessary, and leave the Zakāt for those, who are seriously in need of it.

[47] *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 7, pg. 181

ZAKĀT

10. What is the philosophy behind (the payment) of Zakāt?

It is obvious for three reasons that the role of the public treasury and zakāt (which is one of the sources of income for it), is of extreme importance. Firstly, Islam did not manifest itself as an ethical, philosophical or theological doctrine but rather, came forth as a comprehensive religion that catered for all the material and spiritual needs of the people. Secondly, Islam, from its very onset during the time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, had always been associated with the establishment of a government, and thirdly, Islam pays special attention to supporting the underprivileged ones and combating class difference in the society.

Without any doubt, every society has its share of people who are incapacitated, diseased, handicapped, orphans without guardians and the like, who need to be cared and looked after.

In addition, in order to protect the society from the evil intentions of enemies it is in need of an army, whose expenses are covered by the government. Similarly, there is also the need for funds to be allocated for the employees of the Islamic government, judges, religious centres and, advertising and promotional equipments, which cannot be organized and regulated without an assured and disciplined monetary support.

For this reason, the issue of zakāt, which in reality is regarded as a kind of 'tax on income and production' and 'tax on stagnant wealth', acquires great significance in Islam, to the extent that it is even placed at par with the most important acts of worship - on numerous occasions it has been mentioned together with the prayers and has even been regarded as a condition for the acceptance of the prayers!

We even read in the Islamic traditions that if an Islamic government seeks zakāt from some individuals and they stand up against the government and refuse to pay it, they shall be regarded as

apostates. Furthermore, in spite of repeated counselling, they refuse to back down from their stubborn stance, it is permissible to use military force against them. The incident of the People of Raddah is well known in Islamic history. It is about a group of people who refused to pay their zakāt after the demise of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, whereupon the Caliph of the time initiated a military campaign against them. Even Imam ʿAlī ؑ had endorsed this expedition and had been one of the commanders on the battle-field.

In a tradition, Imam as-Ṣādiq ؑ states:

مَنْ مَنَعَ قِيرَاطاً مِنَ الزَّكَاةِ فَلَيْسَ بِمُؤْمِنٍ وَ لاَ مُسْلِمٍ وَ لاَ كَرَامَةَ.

"One, who withholds (even) one carat of zakāt, is neither a Mu'min nor a Muslim and possesses no esteem and value!"[48]

Interestingly, it can be concluded from the traditions that the measure of zakāt has been so meticulously evaluated in Islam that if all the Muslims were to pay their zakāt completely and correctly, not a single poor and destitute person would exist in the entire Islamic nation!

Imam as-Ṣādiq ؑ says: If all the people were to pay the zakāt of their wealth, not a single Muslim would be left indigent and needy. People do not turn needy, destitute, hungry and bare except due to the transgressions of the affluent ones![49]

From the traditions it can also be deduced that payment of zakāt becomes a reason for the protection of proprietorship and strengthening of its foundation, such that should the people become heedless of this important Islamic principle, divisions and schisms would erupt amongst the groups in such a great measure that even the properties of the affluent ones would fall in jeopardy.

It has been narrated that Imam Mūsā b. Jaʿfar ؑ said:

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[48] *Wasāʾil ash-Shīʿa*, vol. 6, pg. 20, Chapter 4, no. 9
[49] Ibid., vol. 6, pg. 4 (Chapter 1 of the Chapters of Zakāt, no. 6)

حَصِّنوا أَمْوَالَكُمْ بِالزَّكَاةِ.

"Protect your possessions by means of zakāt."[50]

The above meaning has also been conveyed in other traditions that have been reported from the Noble Prophet ﷺ and the Commander of the Faithful ؑ.[51]

[50] Ibid., vol. 6, pg. 6 (no. 11)
[51] *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 8, pg. 10

ḤAJJ

11. What is the secret and philosophy of Ḥajj?

There are four dimensions associated with this great act of worship - each one more deep-rooted and beneficial than the other.

1. The Ethical Dimension

The most important philosophy of Ḥajj is the ethical transformation which it induces within man. The ritual of 'iḥrām' entirely removes man from material ostentations, external distinctions, extravagant clothing and ornaments. By prohibiting pleasures and engaging him in self-rectification - one of the duties of a 'muḥrim'[52], it distances him from the material world and engrosses him in a world of light, purity and spirituality. Consequently, it causes those who, in ordinary circumstances, find themselves weighed down by the burden of make-believe distinctions, ranks and honours, to suddenly feel light, easy and relaxed.

Subsequently, the performance of the other rituals of Ḥajj, one after the other, continually brings man closer to his Lord, strengthens his spiritual connection with Him, distances him from his gloomy and sinful past, and guides him towards a bright, luminous and pure future.

Every step of the Ḥajj-rituals is reminiscent of the events associated with Ibrāhīm عليه السلام, Ismāʾīl عليه السلام and his mother Hājar عليها السلام, and personifies before man their self-sacrifice, altruism and struggle (in the path of Allāh). The city of Makkah in general, and the Masjidul Ḥarām, the Kaʿbah and the place of circumambulation in particular, bring to mind the memories of the Noble Prophet صلى الله عليه وآله, the holy Imams عليهم السلام and the struggle of the Muslims during the period of early Islam. As a result, this ethical transformation tends to be deeper and more profound such that in every corner of Masjidul Ḥarām and the city of Makkah, man visualizes the faces of the Noble

[52] One who has worn the iḥrām. (Tr.)

Prophet ﷺ, ʿAlī عليه السلام and the other holy Imams عليهم السلام, and hears the enthusiastic slogans of their mission.

Indeed, all these together pave the way for an ethical revolution within hearts that are receptive and in a manner that is indescribable, and causes man to turn over a new leaf and opens up a new chapter in his life. It is not without reason that we read in our traditions that one, who performs Ḥajj, completely and perfectly...

يَخْرُجُ مِنْ ذُنُوبِهِ كَهَيْئَتِهِ يَوْمَ وَلَدَتْهُ أُمُّهُ.

"Becomes free of sins just as he was on the day when his mother gave him birth."[53]

Truly, Ḥajj is a second birth for the Muslims - a birth which is the beginning of a new human life.

It is needless to mention that these effects and benefits, and those that we shall mention later, are neither for those who only content themselves with its exterior leaving aside its core, nor for those, who only view it as a means for recreation, tourism, pretension, dissemblance and acquiring personal material items - never acquainting themselves with its spirit and essence. Their share would only be that which they had set out to achieve!

2. The Political Dimension

As has been stated by one of the renowned Islamic jurisprudents, the Ḥajj rituals, apart from putting on display the most sincere and profound acts of worship, are also the most effective means for advancing the political objectives of Islam.

The essence of worship is attention towards Allāh, while the essence of politics is attention towards the 'creation of Allāh' - and these two aspects are observed to be as closely intertwined in Ḥajj as the yarns in a fabric!

[53] *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 99, pg. 26

Ḥajj is an effective factor in establishing unity amongst the ranks of the Muslims.

Ḥajj is an instrument to combat nationalistic and racial fanaticism, and oppose confinement (of the Muslims) within their geographical boundaries.

Ḥajj is a means for eliminating the shackles of censorship and breaking the stranglehold of the oppressive leaderships prevalent in the Islamic nations.

Ḥajj is a tool for transferring news of political affairs of the Islamic nations from one corner of the globe to another, and finally, it is an effective means for breaking the fetters of captivity and colonialism, and liberating the Muslims.

Consequently, during the period when oppressive tyrants like those belonging to the Umayyad and the ʿAbbāsid dynasties ruled over the Islamic regions and kept every kind of interaction between the various segments of the Muslims under close scrutiny in order to crush any kind of liberty-seeking uprising, the advent of the season of Ḥajj was an opening towards freedom, interaction between various segments of the great Islamic society and discussion of various political issues.

One can see why the Commander of the Faithful ؑ, expounding the philosophy that lay behind every act of worship in connection with Ḥajj, states:

أَلْحَجَّ تَقْوِيَةً لِلدِّينِ.

"Allāh has ordained (the rituals of) Ḥajj for the purpose of strengthening the religion."[54]

Again, it is not without reason that an eminent non-Muslim statesman has stated: Woe unto the Muslims if they do not perceive

[54] *Nahj al-Balāgha*, Saying 252

the meaning (and significance) of Ḥajj and woe unto their enemies if they (the Muslims) ever happen to perceive it.

Even in the Islamic traditions Ḥajj has been regarded as the Jihād of the feeble ones. It is a Jihād in which even the old and weak men and women can join and have a contribution in exhibiting the greatness and grandeur of the Islamic ummah. By standing in circles around the holy Kaʿbah and attesting to Allāh's unity and greatness, they cause the hearts of the enemies of Islam to palpitate in trepidation.

3. The Cultural Dimension

The interaction between the various segments of the Islamic society during the season of Ḥajj can turn out to be the most effective factor for cultural exchanges and transfer of thoughts and ideas. This is especially so because the grand gathering of Ḥajj is in reality, a true and natural representation of all the segments of the Muslims of the world (as there is no forced, forged or artificial factor involved in the selection of those proceeding for Ḥajj. The pilgrims are individuals who come from all segments, races and languages associated with the Muslims all over the world, who have gathered under one roof). Thus we read in the traditions: One of the benefits of Ḥajj is the spread of the traditions of the Noble Prophet ﷺ throughout the entire Islamic world.

Hishām b. Ḥakam, one of the learned companions of Imam as-Ṣādiq عليه السلام says: I questioned the Imam عليه السلام about the philosophy that lay behind the performance of Ḥajj and the circumambulation of the Kaʿbah whereupon he عليه السلام replied: "Allāh created the servants ... and for the welfare of their worldly and religious affairs, He sent down His commandments for them - one of them being the congregation of the people from the East and the West (for the Ḥajj rituals). This, in order that the Muslims become acquainted with one another, become aware of the states of each other, and (so that) every group transfers its business investments from one city to another ... and in order that the memories and traditions of the Noble Prophet ﷺ

become known, and the people bring them to mind and do not forget them."[55]

It was on this basis that the Muslims, during the suffocating eras in which the tyrannical caliphs and rulers had prohibited them from spreading these rulings, made use of this opportunity (of Ḥajj) to interact with the Imams ﻉ and eminent religious scholars for solving their problems, understanding the rulings of Islam and comprehending the traditions and customs of the Noble Prophet ﷺ.

On the other hand, Ḥajj possesses the ability to be transformed into a gigantic cultural assembly in which scholars and intellectuals of the Islamic world, come together for a few days in Makkah, propounding their thoughts and exhibiting their creativity before the others.

Essentially, one of the great catastrophes is that the boundaries between the Islamic nations become the cause for them to separate from each other, culturally. As a consequence, Muslims of each nation only reflect upon their own selves and their own state of affairs, and this is something that effectively works towards dismembering and dissecting the single Islamic society; indeed, Ḥajj has the ability to stem this evil outcome.

How beautifully has Imam as-Ṣādiq ﻉ stated in that tradition of Hishām b. Ḥakam when he said: "If all the people were to be concerned only about their respective countries and the problems existing therein, all of them would suffer destruction, their countries would face ruination, their benefits and welfare would be lost, and realities would become obscured and concealed."

4. The Financial Dimension

Contrary to what some people imagine, utilizing the great assembly of Ḥajj for strengthening the financial foundations of the Islamic nations is not inconsistent with the spirit of Ḥajj. Instead, according to the Islamic traditions, it constitutes one of the philosophies for it.

[55] *Wasā'il ash-Shī'a*, vol. 8, pg. 9

What harm is there if the Muslims in that great gathering, were to lay the foundations of a common and associated Islamic market, and pave the way for commercial transactions amongst themselves in a manner in which neither do their profits enter the pockets of their enemies nor does their economy become dependent upon the others? An act of this type would not be called 'craving for the world' but rather, it would constitute an act of worship and Jihād (in the way of Allāh).

In that tradition of Hishām b. Ḥakam from Imam as-Ṣādiq عليه السلام, an express reference has been made towards this aspect that one of the objectives of Ḥajj is strengthening the commerce of the Muslims and facilitating economic association and cooperation amongst them.

In another tradition, Imam as-Ṣādiq عليه السلام, interpreting the verse...

﴿ لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُناحٌ أَنْ تَبْتَغُوا فَضْلاً مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ ﴾

"There is no blame on you in seeking bounty from your Lord."[56]

... says: The meaning of this verse is 'seeking livelihood'.

إِذَا أَحَلَّ الرَّجُلُ مِنْ إِحْرَامِهِ وَ قَضَى فَلْيَشْتَرِ وَ لْيَبِعْ فِي الْمَوْسِمِ.

"And when a person comes out of his iḥrām and completes the Ḥajj, he should conduct business transactions during the season of Ḥajj (for instead of being a sin it carries rewards.)"[57]

This meaning is also witnessed in a tradition[58] from Imam ʿAlī b. Mūsā al-Riḍā عليه السلام which explicitly enumerates the philosophies and objectives underlying the rites of Ḥajj; in the tradition, the Imam عليه السلام recites the following verse of the Noble Qurʾan:

[56] *Sūratul Baqarah* (2), Verse 198
[57] *Tafsīr ʿAyyāshī*, as stated by *Tafsīr al-Mīzān*, vol. 2, pg. 86
[58] *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 99, pg. 32

﴿ لِيَشْهَدُوا مَنَافِعَ لَهُمْ ﴾

"That they may witness advantages for them"[59], a reference to the fact that the verse alludes to the spiritual benefits as well as the material ones - although both of them, from one perspective, can be looked upon as being spiritual in nature.

In short, if this great worship were to be utilized correctly and perfectly, and the pilgrims of the House of Allāh, at a time when they are active and their hearts are emotionally ready in that holy land, were to make use of this great opportunity for solving the various problems that plague the Islamic society by establishing various political, cultural and mercantile assemblies, it would surely serve to untie the knots and solve the problems. Perhaps this is why Imam as-Ṣādiq ﷺ has said:

لاَ يَزَالُ الدِّينُ قَائِماً مَا قَامَتِ الْكَعْبَةُ.

"The religion shall continue to stand as long as the Kaʿbah continues to do so."[60]

Imam ʿAlī ﷺ too has said:

أَللّٰهَ اللّٰهَ فِي بَيْتِ رَبِّكُمْ فَلاَ يَخْلُو مِنْكُمْ مَا بَقِيتُمْ فَإِنَّهُ إِنْ تُرِكَ لَمْ تُنَاظَرُوا.

"Fear Allāh in the matter of His House (Kaʿbah)! Do not desert it for if it is deserted, divine reprieve shall be taken away from you."[61]

In view of the immense significance of the above issue, in the Islamic sources of traditions a separate chapter has been devoted to the ruling that if it were to ever happen that in a particular year the Muslims decide to refrain from going for Ḥajj, it would become

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[59] *Sūratul Ḥajj* (22), Verse 28 (Tr.)
[60] *Wasāʾil ash-Shīʿa*, vol. 8, pg. 14
[61] *Nahj al-Balāgha*, letter 47

obligatory upon the Islamic government to send them to Makkah by means of force![62 and 63]

Ḥajj - An Important Worship for Human Development

The journey for Ḥajj is a divine one and, in reality, a great migration; an expansive field for self-development, self-rectification and the Greatest Battle (Jihād-e-Akbar).

The Ḥajj rituals collectively are an act of worship profoundly associated with the struggle of Ibrāhīm ﷷ his son Ismāʾīl ﷷ and his wife Hājar and if we were to remain heedless of this aspect while studying the secrets and objectives of Ḥajj, many of its rites and rituals would only float before us as enigmas; the solution to this lies in keeping this deep association within our sights during the course of the study.

When we come to the sacrificial grounds in Mina, the innumerable sacrifices performed there leave us amazed and perplexed; basically, is it possible for animal-sacrifice to be a part of the rituals associated with an act of worship?

But when we bring to mind the incident of Ibrāhīm ﷷ when he sincerely endeavoured to sacrifice his nearest and dearest one in the path of Allāh subsequent to which the sacrifice at Mina came into existence in the form of a custom, we comprehend the philosophy lying behind it.

Offering sacrifice, in reality, implies one's total disregard for everything else when striving in the way of Allāh and is a demonstration of cleansing one's heart from everything other than Allāh. The reformative and educative effects of these rites can be derived in sufficient measure only when the entire scenario of the sacrifice of Ismāʾīl ﷷ andfs the spiritual state of the father and the

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[62] *Wasāʾil ash-Shīʿa*, vol. 8, pg. 15 (The Chapter of 'Obligation Upon The Governor To Compel The People For Ḥajj')

[63] *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 14, pg. 76

son leading up to the sacrifice is incarnated before man's eyes and this spiritual state casts its influence upon him.[64]

When we proceed towards Jamarāt (three stone pillars, which the pilgrims strike with pebbles - each one to be struck with seven pebbles – in a special ritual of Ḥajj), the rituals there appear enigmatic and inexplicable to us and we are given to wonder as to what could be the idea behind stoning a lifeless stone pillar and what problem could such an act possibly solve?

However, when we bring to mind the struggle of Ibrāhīm ﷺ - the champion of monotheism - against the whisperings of the Satan, who appeared before him on three occasions - each time seeking to weaken his resolve and distract him from the Jihād-e-Akbar (The Greatest Battle) - and on each occasion Ibrāhīm ﷺ repelled him by means of stones, these rites appear more meaningful and comprehensible to us.

These rituals convey the meaning that: Throughout your lives, all of you too, are in confrontation with the whisperings of the Satans during the Jihād-e-Akbar (Greatest Battle), and until you do not stone them and drive them away, you shall never be victorious. If you desire that Allāh, just as He had sent His salutations upon Ibrāhīm ﷺ and made his name and doctrine eternal, should also cast His look of grace and favour upon you, then you must follow his ﷺ path too.

When we arrive at Ṣafā and Marwah where we observe the people repeatedly moving to and fro between one small mountain and another even smaller one without getting anything - at times walking and at times running - we are surely overtaken by astonishment as to what kind of ritual this is and what could it possibly mean and signify.

[64] Unfortunately, of late, the sacrificial rites have come to acquire an undesirable form and the Islamic scholars must strive to rectify it.

But then, when we bring to mind the efforts of Hājar for saving the life of her suckling child in that hot and scorching desert, and how Allāh, after her sincere efforts, granted her wish by making the water of Zamzam to flow from beneath the foot of her new-born child, the clock suddenly turns back for us, the curtains tend to get lifted and we find ourselves near Hājar, accompanying her in her quest and efforts. In the path of Allāh, one cannot hope to attain any rank and status without exertion and effort!

From what we have presented above, it can be easily concluded that Ḥajj should be taught in this manner; the memories of Ibrāhīm عليه السلام his son and his wife should be personified step by step so that not only is the philosophy of Ḥajj perceived and comprehended, but also its profound ethical effects illuminate and influence the souls of the pilgrims - for without these effects the entire Ḥajj is nothing but a mere façade.[65]

[65] *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 19, pg. 125

JIHĀD

12. What purpose does Islam seek to achieve by Jihād? What is the need for the 'Initiating Jihād'?

The Islamic Jihād can be classified into three categories.

1 – The 'Initiating' and 'Liberating' Jihād

Allāh has prescribed a set of orders and chalked out programmes for the development, freedom, comfort, happiness and prosperity of man, and has entrusted unto His prophets the responsibility of communicating these to the people. Now, if an individual or a group of individuals regard the communication of these orders detrimental to their personal lowly interests and endeavour to obstruct the prophets in fulfilling their divine responsibilities, the prophets possess the right to remove the obstructions lying in their path, initially by utilizing peaceful means and if not possible, then by use of force, in order to acquire for themselves the freedom to propagate (the commandments of Allāh).

In other words, in every society, people have the right to listen to those who invite them towards the path of Truth, and possess freedom to accept their invitation. But if some individuals deprive them of their legitimate right and inhibit them from hearing the truth and becoming freed from their mental and social captivity and slavery, the followers of these divine programmes possess the right to utilize every means at their disposal in order to achieve this freedom. It is here that the necessity of the Initiating Jihād in Islam and other divine religions becomes manifest.

Similarly, if some individuals were to compel the believers to revert to their original religion, every means could be employed for repelling such compulsions too.

2 – The 'Defensive' Jihād

At times it so happens that a battle is imposed upon an individual or a group such that they find themselves as the object of a calculated and/or a surprise attack. In such an instance, all divine and man-

made laws permit the persons attacked to defend themselves and employ every available means to protect themselves. This kind of Jihād is referred to as the defensive Jihād; the battles of Aḥzāb, Uhud, Mūtah, Tabūk, Hunaīn and some other Islamic battles are examples of this category of Jihād which were defensive in nature.

3 – Jihād for the 'Eradication Of Polytheism And Idolatry'

Although Islam invites the people to select this religion - the last and the most exalted of all religions - nonetheless, it also respects the freedom of belief and it is for this reason that it grants the communities, which possess divine books, sufficient opportunity so that, after study and reflection, they may accept the religion of Islam. But if they do not do so it looks upon them as a confederate and by placing some specific conditions, which are neither intricate nor difficult, endeavours to have a peaceful co-existence with them.

However, the issue of polytheism is different since it is neither a religion nor a doctrine and so it cannot be looked upon with respect and esteem - rather, it is a kind of superstition, deviation and foolishness. In reality, it is a kind of mental and moral sickness, which ought to be uprooted.

The use of the terms 'freedom' and 'respect', in connection with the views of others, is applicable if the views or the beliefs are at least based upon a foundation. However, deviation, superstition and sickness are not something that can be treated as respectable, and it is due to this that Islam has ordered idolatry to be uprooted from the human society, even at the cost of warfare; if idol temples and their evil influences cannot be brought down and destroyed by peaceful means, then they should be uprooted by means of force.[66]

From what has been mentioned above, the answer to the venomous propaganda of the Church becomes plainly evident since a sentence more explicit than:

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[66] *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 2, pg. 15

“There is no compulsion in (acceptance) of the religion.”

which appears in the Qurʾan, cannot be found in this regard.

Of course, for the purpose of distortion, these people focus their attention upon the battles of Islam; however, a study of these battles clearly reveal that while some of these were purely defensive in nature, others - that belonged to the category of initiating Jihād - were not initiated with the objective of conquering lands and forcing the people into the religion of Islam but instead, for overturning incorrect and oppressive regimes, and providing opportunity to the people to freely study and review the religion and modes of social lifestyle.

Islamic history is a living testimony to the above, since it has been observed repeatedly that when the Muslims conquered cities they would grant freedom to the followers of other religions (just as they would do to the Muslims) and these people even performed their acts of worship and observed their religious ceremonies unhindered. If a limited tax, by the name of Jizyah, was taken from them, it was for the purpose of providing social security and covering the expenses of the security forces, since their lives, properties and womenfolk were under the protection of Islam.

Those people who deal with the history of Islam, are aware of this reality and even the Christians, who have written books on Islam, have acknowledged this issue. For example, in the book La Civilisation des Arabes we read: “The Muslims were so lenient towards the other communities that the religious leaders of these communities had the permission to organize their own religious gatherings.”

In some historical accounts it has been reported that a group of Christians, who had arrived in the presence of the Noble Prophet for the purpose of research and investigation, performed their

religious ceremonies in the Mosque of the Noble Prophet ﷺ in the city of Madinah - freely and unchecked![67]

13. How does Islam attest slavery?

Some people criticize Islam as to why this divine religion, with all its distinguished human values, did not abrogate slavery in its entirety and announce the freedom of all slaves by means of one decisive and general decree.

It is true that Islam has made numerous recommendations with respect to slaves, but what is of prime importance is their unconditional liberty and freedom. Why should a human be owned by another human and lose his freedom - the greatest divine gift?

In one short sentence it can be said that Islam has chalked out an accurate schedule for the freedom of slaves such that eventually not only would all of them gradually become free, but at the same time, this would take place without causing any adverse reaction within the society.

Islam's Strategy for Liberating Slaves

Something that is not usually taken into account is that if an erroneous system penetrates into a society, it takes time to uproot it, and any uncalculated step would only yield an opposite result. This is similar to a person, who is afflicted with a dangerous disease which has reached a very advanced stage of its existence, or an addict, who has been addicted to drugs for decades; in such cases, it is imperative to employ phased and scheduled programs.

Speaking more plainly, if Islam, by means of one general order, had ordered the people to free all the slaves in one stroke, it was possible that most of the slaves might have possibly perished since, at times, they constituted nearly half of the population of the society. Coupled with this was the fact that, they had no source of

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[67] *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 2, pg. 205

income, no independent work, no dwelling and no means to lead their lives.

If all the slaves were to have become free on one day and at one particular hour, a huge unemployed group would have suddenly manifested itself within the society such that not only would it have placed itself in difficulty and endangered its own existence, but would have also thrown the entire discipline and order of the society into disarray. This is because when they experienced the pressures of deprivation, they would have had to resort to violence and aggression, and this would have led to dissension, skirmishes and bloodshed.

Therefore, it was vital that they became free and got absorbed into the society, gradually, so that neither did their own lives fall into peril nor did they threaten the peace and security of the society - and it was this calculated strategy that Islam pursued.

There are several parts to this strategy and the most important points from each of them shall be listed here, although briefly, since a detailed explanation demands that a separate and independent book is written for the purpose.

The First Part: Eliminating the Sources of Slavery

Throughout the ages, there have been numerous factors and causes of slavery. Debtors who were unable to pay off their debts, and prisoners of war, landed up as slaves. Power and strength provided a license for procuring slaves. Powerful nations would send their forces armed with various weapons to the backward nations of the African continent and other such regions, subjugate their inhabitants into captivity, transferring them in groups, by means of ships, to the markets of Asian and European countries.

Islam put its foot down upon these means and approved only one instance for slavery - prisoners of war. In addition, even this was not obligatory; it granted permission that, in accordance with the

general welfare and expediencies they could be set free, either unconditionally or after payment of ransom.

In those days there were no prisons in which the prisoners of war could be held till their affairs were sorted out and hence, there lay no alternative except to retain them, by distributing them amongst the families as slaves.

It is self-evident that when these circumstances change, there exists no reason for the leader of the Muslims to adhere to the ruling of slavery in connection with the prisoners of war; rather, he is at liberty to set them free by way of favour or ransom. In this regard, Islam has authorized the leader of the Muslims to take into consideration the general welfare and all-round interests and then choose the course of action necessary. In this manner, the causes leading to further slavery were almost completely eliminated.

The Second Part: Opening the Door Towards freedom

Islam has chalked out an elaborate program for the freedom of slaves, and had the Muslims acted upon it, it would not have been very long before all the slaves had become free and absorbed within the Islamic society.

The main points of this program:

1. One of the eight instances in which zakāt can be expended in Islam is purchasing slaves and setting them free[68]. In this manner, a perpetual and continuous budget from the Public Treasury has been allocated for this purpose and which shall continue till the complete freedom of all slaves is achieved.

2. In pursuance of the objective, provisions exist in Islam which permit the slaves to enter into an agreement with their masters and purchase their freedom by paying them from the wages which they

[68] *Sūratul Taubah* (9), Verse 60

earn (in Islamic jurisprudence, an entire chapter titled Mukātabah, has been devoted to this issue).[69]

3. Freeing slaves is regarded as one of the most important acts of worship in Islam and the Infallibles ﷺ always led the way in this issue, to the extent that in connection with Imam ʿAlī ﷺ it has been recorded that:

أَعتَقَ أَلفاً مِنْ كَدِّ يَدِهِ.

"He freed a thousand slaves by means of his wages (which he used to earn)."[70]

4. The Infallibles ﷺ used to free slaves at the slightest of excuses so that it serves as an example for the others, to the extent that when one of the slaves of Imam Baqir ﷺ performed a good deed, the Imam ﷺ said:

فَاذْهَبْ فَأَنْتَ حُرٌّ فَإِنِّي أَكْرَهُ أَنْ أَسْتَخْدِمَ رَجُلاً مِنْ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ.

"Go, you are now free for I do not approve of a person from the inmates of Paradise to be my slave (and serve me)."[71]

It has been narrated in connection with Imam Sajjād ﷺ that once, his servant was in the process of pouring water over his ﷺ head when the vessel slipped from his hand and injured the Imam ﷺ. The Imam ﷺ looked up at the servant whereupon, the servant recited:

﴿ وَ الْكَاظِمِينَ الْغَيْظَ ﴾

"...and those who restrain (their) anger."[72]

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[69] The issue of *mukātabah* and the interesting rulings associated with it has been discussed at great length in *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 14, pg. 459 & 467.

[70] *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 41, pg. 43

[71] *Wasā'il ash-Shīʿa*, vol. 16, pg. 32

[72] *Sūrat Āle ʿImrān* (3), Verse 134 (Tr.)

Hearing this, the Imam ﷵ said: I have restrained my anger. The servant recited further:

﴿ وَ الْعَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ ﴾

"...and pardon other people."

The Imam ﷵ said: May Allāh forgive you. The servant continued:

﴿ وَ اللّٰهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴾

"...and Allāh loves the doers of good (to others)"

whereupon the Imam ﷵ said: 'Go. For the sake of Allāh, you are (now) free.'[73]

5. In some of the traditions it has been stated that the slaves, after a period of seven years, would become free automatically, as we read in a tradition that Imam as-Ṣādiq ﷵ said: One, who is a believer, becomes free after seven years - irrespective of whether his master approves of it or not. It is not permissible to extract services from a slave, who is a believer, after seven years.[74]

In this very chapter there is a tradition from the Noble Prophet ﷺ wherein he ﷺ says:

مَا زَالَ جَبْرَئِيلُ يُوصِينِي بِالْمَمْلُوكِ حَتَّى ظَنَنْتُ أَنَّهُ سَيَضْرِبُ لَهُ أَجَلاً يُعْتَقُ فِيهِ.

"Jibraʾīl used to make recommendations to me, with respect to the slaves, so often that I was given to suppose that he would shortly stipulate a time-period after which they would (automatically) become free."[75]

[73] *Tafsīr Nūr al-Thaqalain*, vol. 1, pg. 390
[74] *Wasāʾil ash-Shīʿa*, vol. 16, pg. 36
[75] *Wasāʾil ash-Shīʿa*, vol. 17, pg. 37

6. If a person, who owns a slave in partnership, liberates him in the ratio of his share in the partnership, he is obliged to purchase the remaining part of the slave and liberate him fully.[76]

Moreover, if a person who owns a slave fully, frees a portion of the ownership, this freedom permeates into the other portions too and the slave becomes completely free, automatically![77]

7. Whenever one becomes the owner of one's father, mother, grand-fathers, sons, paternal and maternal uncles and aunts, brothers, sisters or nephews, they immediately (and automatically) become free.

8. If a master fathers a child by way of his slave-girl, it is not permissible for him to sell her and she must be later set free by utilizing the son's share of the inheritance.

This issue became a cause for the freedom of a great number of slave-girls, since many of the slave-girls were like wives for their masters and had children from them.

9. In Islam, expiation of many of the sins has been stipulated by freeing slaves (expiation for unintentional murder, intentional abandonment of fasts, and for (breaking an) oath are some examples of this).

10. Some exceptionally harsh punishments have been singled out (by Islam) whereby if a master were to subject his slave to any of these, the slave would automatically become free.[78 and 79]

14. What is Jizyah and What is its Philosophy?

Jizyah is derived from جَزاء and refers to the money taken from the non-Muslims, who are under the protection of the Islamic government. It has been named so because it is paid by the non-

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[76] *Sharāiʿ al-Islam*, (The book of freedom (of a slave)); *Wasāʾil ash-Shīʿa*, vol. 16, pg. 21

[77] *Sharāiʿ al-Islām*, (The book of freedom (of a slave))

[78] *Wasāʾil ash-Shīʿa*, vol. 16, pg. 26

[79] *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 21, pg. 413

Muslims to the Islamic government as recompense for the protection granted to them with respect to their lives and properties (as stated by Rāghib, in his book al-Mufradāt).

It is a kind of an Islamic poll tax that is associated with individuals - not land or wealth; in other words, it is a yearly computation.

Some people are of the opinion that its root is of non-Arabic origin and has been derived from the ancient Persian word كزيت, which means tax taken to strengthen the army. However, numerous others believe that this word is totally Arabic of origin and, as we have previously mentioned, taken from جزاء, in view of the fact that the tax was a compensation for the security provided by the Islamic government to the religious minorities.

Jizyah also existed prior to Islam and it is the view of some people that the first person to levy it was Anushirwān, the Sassanide king. But even if we do not consider this to be the case, he was certainly one who did levy this tax upon his people. He would take varying amounts of 4, 6, 8, or 12 dirhams as a yearly tax from all individuals who were between the ages of 20 and 50, except the functionaries of the government.

The main philosophy behind this tax has been explained as follows: Defending the existence, independence and security of a nation is the responsibility of all the individuals of that nation. Now, if one group comes forward to practically shoulder this responsibility (in the form of soldiers), whilst another group, due to its involvement in work and trade, is unable to stand alongside the soldiers, then, it is the responsibility of this second group to pay for the expenses of the soldiers and security forces in the form of a per capita tax, in the year.

We have evidence which attest this philosophy to be true in the case of Jizyah – be it before the arrival of Islam or after.

The age-group of those who had to pay Jizyah during the rule of Anushirwān - as has been previously stated by us (between 20 and

50 years) - is an articulate testimony in this regard, since people in this age-group possess the strength and ability to carry weapons, and to help out in maintaining the independence and security of a nation. But being engaged in work and trade, they used to pay the Jizyah instead.

Another testimony in this regard is the fact that in Islam, it is not necessary for the Muslims to pay Jizyah. This is because Jihād is obligatory upon everyone and when the occasion demands, everyone must step out into the battle-field to stand up against the enemy. Since the religious minorities are exempted from Jihād, they must pay Jizyah in order that, in this way, they (too) have a part in safeguarding the security of the Islamic nation in which they lead a life of peace and tranquillity.

In addition to this, the exemption of ladies, children, the old and the blind of the religious minorities from paying Jizyah is yet another proof in this regard.

From what has been mentioned, it becomes plain that Jizyah is just a kind of monetary assistance paid by the People of the Book vis-à-vis responsibility, which the Muslims have shouldered with respect to safeguarding their lives and possessions.

Thus those people who have regarded Jizyah as a kind of 'subjugation of rights', have not taken into consideration the spirit and the idea that lie behind it. They are oblivious of the fact that when the Ahlul Kitāb (People of the Book) enter into the category of Ahlul Dhimmah (protected people), the Islamic leadership is obliged to grant them protection from every kind of aggression and harassment.

Bearing in mind that against the payment of Jizyah, in addition to availing protection and security benefits, they do not possess any other obligation such as participation in battles or involvement in other defensive and security affairs, it is obvious that their

responsibility towards the Islamic government is much lighter than that of the Muslims.

It follows that by paying a meagre annual amount, they avail themselves of all the benefits of the Islamic government as do the Muslims while, at the same time, they are not exposed to any danger.

This philosophy can be corroborated by examining the covenants established during the period of the Islamic government between the Muslims and the People of the Book in connection with Jizyah, in which it has been expressly stated that the People of the Book were obliged to pay the Jizyah and in return, the Muslims were obliged to guarantee their safety, to the extent that even if some enemy happened to attack them, the Islamic government would be duty-bound to defend them!

These covenants are numerous in number and, as an example, we present below the covenant, which was entered into between Khālid b. Walīd and the Christians living around the Euphrates. The text of the covenant is as follows: "This is a letter from Khālid b. Walīd to Saluba[80] and his companions. I hereby enter into a covenant of Jizyah and defence with you, and in exchange for it you shall avail of the benefit of our support. As long as we continue to support and defend you, we shall possess the right to take Jizyah from you and if not, then we shall have no right to take it. This covenant has been written in the month of Safar, twelve years after the migration (Hijri)."[81]

Interestingly, we observe that whenever there was a failure or neglect in supporting or defending them, the Muslims would either return the Jizyah to them or not collect it from them at all!

It is also necessary to note that the measure of Jizyah is not fixed and defined - rather, it depends upon the ability of those paying it.

[80] The leader of the Christian group.
[81] Quoted from *Tafsīr al-Manār*, vol. 10, pg. 294

However, Islamic history reveals that a small amount would usually be specified, and at times this would not exceed one dinār a year. Occasionally the covenant even contained the condition that those paying the Jizyah were obliged to pay it in the measure of their means and ability.

The above discussion serves to clear the various objections and caustic criticisms levelled at this Islamic ruling, and establish that this is a ruling that is both just and logical.[82]

15. What is the Philosophy behind the Prohibition of Battles in the Holy Months?

In verse 36 of Sūratul Taubah, we read:

﴿ إِنَّ عِدَّةَ الشُّهُورِ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ إِثْنَا عَشَرَ شَهْراً فِي كِتَابِ اللّٰهِ يَوْمَ خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَ الأَرْضَ مِنْهَا أَرْبَعَةٌ حُرُمٌ ﴾

"Surely the number of months with Allāh is twelve months in Allāh's ordinance since the day when He created the heavens and the earth, of these four being sacred."

The question that is propounded here is: Why are Muslims prohibited to wage battles in the four months (Dhul Qaʿdah, Dhul Ḥijjah, Muḥarram and Rajab)?

Prohibition of battles in these four months is one of the ways to bring to conclusion long-drawn and protracted battles, and a means of invitation towards peace and reconciliation. With the laying down of arms, the dying down of the sound of clashing of swords and whistling of arrows, and the presence of an opportunity for thought and reflection, there is a strong possibility that the battles may come to an end.

There is a vast difference between a persistent and continued confrontation and a renewed start following a lull - the latter being

[82] *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 7, pg. 354

much more difficult and severe. We cannot forget how difficult it had been during the Vietnam War, to bring about a ceasefire for a period of 24 hours for the start of the Christian New Year - or in other similar instances. On the other hand, Islam has announced for its followers a ceasefire of four months in every year, and this itself is an indication of its peace-loving nature. But as we previously mentioned, if the enemy desires to misuse this Islamic ruling and trample the sanctity of these holy months, the Muslims have been granted permission to retaliate in a likewise manner.[83]

[83] *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 7, pg. 408

THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN IN ISLAM

16. What Rights does Islam offer to the Women?

With the onset of Islam and its special teachings, the life of women entered into a new phase – a phase which differed vastly from the previous one and became one in which women availed of all kinds of individual, social and human rights. The basis of Islamic teachings with respect to women is exactly what we read in the Noble Qurʾan:

﴿ وَ لَهُنَّ مِثْلُ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ﴾

"...and they have rights similar to those against them in a just manner..." i.e. the women possess rights and privileges in the same measure as the responsibilities which they shoulder within the society.

Islam considers a woman, just like a man, to possess a human soul, will and choice, and perceives her to be on the path of spiritual perfection, which is actually the purpose of human creation. It is for this reason that it has placed man and woman alongside each other, addressed them together:

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ ﴾

and:

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ﴾

and imposed moral, educative and scientific curriculum upon both of them.

By means of verses such as:

﴿ وَ مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحاً مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَى وَ هُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولٰئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ ﴾

"...and whoever does good, whether male or female, and he is a believer, these shall enter the garden."[84]

Islam has promised the benefits of complete prosperity to both the sexes.

By verses such as:

﴿ مَنْ عَمِلَ صالِحاً مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثى وَ هُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهُ حَياةً طَيِّبَةً وَ لَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ ما كانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴾

"Whoever does good whether male or female and he is a believer, We will most certainly make him live a happy life, and We will most certainly give them their reward for the best of what they did."[85]

it has elucidated that every man and woman, by adhering to and implementing the Islamic curriculum, can achieve material and spiritual perfection, and possess a pure, good life that is replete with ease and comfort.

Islam considers a woman, like man, to be completely free and independent, and the Noble Qur'an, by way of verses like:

﴿ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِما كَسَبَتْ رَهِينَةٌ ﴾

"Every soul is held in pledge for what it earns."[86]

or

﴿ مَنْ عَمِلَ صالِحاً فَلِنَفْسِهِ وَ مَنْ أَساءَ فَعَلَيْها ﴾

"Whoever does good, it is for his own soul, and whoever does evil, it is against himself."[87]

It declares this freedom to be for all people - men and women.

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[84] *Sūratul Ghāfir* (40), Verse 40
[85] *Sūratul Naḥl* (16), Verse 97
[86] *Sūratul Muddaththir* (74), Verse 38
[87] *Sūratul Jāthiyah* (45), Verse 15

We observe that the Islamic penal code sentences both genders with the same kind of retribution, as can be seen in the following verse and other similar verses:

﴿ الزَّانِيَةُ وَ الزَّانِي فَاجْلِدُوا كُلَّ واحِدٍ مِنْهُمَا مِائَةَ جَلْدَةٍ ﴾

"The woman and the man guilty of adultery or fornication - flog each of them with a hundred whippings."[88]

On the other hand, since independence is an inevitable consequence of (free) will and choice, Islam has also extended this independence to all monetary privileges, permitting women to enter into various kinds of monetary transactions and regarding her as the rightful owner of her income and investment. In Sūratul Nisā we read:

﴿ لِلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ مِمَّا اكْتَسَبُوا وَ لِلنِّسَاءِ نَصِيبٌ مِمَّا اكْتَسَبْنَ ﴾

"Men shall have the benefit of what they earn and women shall have the benefit of what they earn."[89]

In view of the fact that the word اكتساب (used in the verse) - unlike the word كسب - is used to denote acquisition of wealth, the use of this word conveys the meaning that the wealth which is acquired becomes associated with the person acquiring it[90], and also taking into consideration the general rule:

أَلنَّاسُ مُسَلّطُونَ عَلىٰ أَمْوَالِهِمْ.

"All the people have authority over their own wealth", we can easily infer that Islam holds the fiscal independence of women in great esteem and does not differentiate between a man and a woman in this regard.

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[88] *Sūratul Nūr* (24), Verse 2

[89] *Sūratul Nisā* (4), Verse 32

[90] Refer *Al-Mufradāt* of Rāghib Isfahānī. It should be known that this point is applicable in instances when كَسب and اِكتِسَاب are used in conjunction with one another.

In short, Islam regards a woman as a fundamental element of the society and thus, she should not be treated as an entity that is lacking in will, and dependant upon or in need of a guardian.

One Should Not Err With Respect to the Meaning Of 'Equality'

The only thing that needs be taken into consideration – to which Islam has paid special attention but which some individuals reject out of excessive and imprudent sentimentality - is the issue of physical and psychological difference between man and woman, and the difference in their responsibilities.

We just cannot refute the reality that there exist vast physical and psychological differences between the two sexes, and since these are mentioned in various books it is not necessary that we repeat them here. However, a summary of all of them is as follows:

A woman is the base for man's existence since the development of the children take place within her arms; hence just as she has been created physically to handle the tasks of bearing, developing and educating the coming generations, psychologically too she is in possession of a greater share of feelings and sentiments.

With the existence of these vast differences, can it be said that men and women must be in step with each other in all matters and should be absolutely equal in all affairs and issues?

Should we not champion the cause of justice in the society? But is justice other than that every person should adhere to his own responsibility and enjoy the benefits of the existential distinctions present within him?

Thus, is it not contrary to justice to involve and engage a woman in tasks that do not match and harmonize with her physical and psychological setup?

Here we observe that Islam, even as it voices support for justice and equality, grants precedence to man in some of the social tasks which demand asperity or meticulousness - such as guardianship of the house - and has allowed the woman to function as an assistant.

Both a 'house' and a 'society' are in need of an administrator, and the reins of administration should eventually end up in the hands of one person or else it would result in contest, chaos and confusion.

Under these circumstances, who is better suited for the task - a man or a woman? Impartial and unbiased computations reveal that the structural state of man demands that the administration and management of the family should be placed upon the man while the woman should act as his assistant.

Even though there are some who insist on ignoring these realities, the state of life prevalent in the present-day world and even within communities that have granted women complete freedom and equality, reveal that in practice the issue is exactly as has been stated above, although in speech the issue may be made to appear differently.[91]

The Spiritual Worth of Man and Woman

The Noble Qur᾿an perceives man and woman - with regards to their presence before Allāh and with respect to achieving spiritual ranks under similar conditions - to be equal. It refuses to consider the dissimilarity in their sexes and the difference in the structure of their bodies, (which consequently manifest in the variation in their social responsibilities), as being indicative of a difference in them with regards to the achievement of human perfection; rather, in this regard, it considers them to be on par with one another and hence mentions them together. Numerous verses of the Noble Qur᾿an were revealed at a time when a great number of the communities of the world had been reluctant to recognize the female species as a human being, regarding her as an accursed entity and a source of sin, deviation and death!

Many of the ancient communities even held the belief that a woman's worship was not acceptable in the eyes of Allāh. Many of the Greeks considered a woman to be a defiled entity and an evil

[91] *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 2, pg. 113

handiwork of Satan. The Romans and some of the Greeks believed that basically females did not possess a human soul and as such, the human soul was specifically confined to the males!

Interestingly, till recently, Christian scholars in Spain engaged themselves in discussing whether women, like men, possessed human souls or not, and whether or not their souls would continue to live eternally after their deaths. After their discussions they eventually concluded that since a woman's soul is an isthmus between an animal and a human soul, it cannot be eternal, save for the soul of Maryam عليها السلام.[92]

Here it becomes apparent how far from reality the allegation is, which some ignorant individuals level against Islam that it is a religion of males and not females. Generally speaking, if, due to physical and sentimental differences which exist within males and females, some differences in respect of social responsibilities are observed in the Islamic Laws, it does not by any means, diminish the spiritual worth of a woman. There exists no difference between a man and a woman in this regard; the doors of success and prosperity lay equally open for both of them, just as we read in the Qur'an:

"All are from one species and one society."[93]

17. What is the Philosophy of Ḥijāb?

Undoubtedly, in this age of ours - which some have named as the 'age of nudity and sexual freedom' and in which, West-stricken individuals regard wantonness of women as being part of this freedom - the mention of ḥijāb is very disconcerting for this group

[92] Refer the books An apology for Muhammad and the Koran, Huqooq-e-Zan Dar Islam and other books related to the humans beliefs and views.
[93] *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 3, pg. 223

of people and at times is even looked upon as a myth associated with the ancient times!

However, the innumerable evils and the ever-increasing problems arising out of this unconditioned freedom have gradually resulted in the concept of ḥijāb being viewed with a greater interest.

Of course, in the Islamic and religious environments - especially in Iran after the revolution - a great number of issues have been clarified and satisfactory answers to most of these questions have been provided. Nevertheless, the significance of the topic demands this issue to be discussed more comprehensively.

The issue under discussion is: Should women (with due apologies) be placed at the disposal of all men for the purpose of being exploited by them by way of sight, hearing and touch (excepting sexual intercourse), or should these benefits be the sole prerogative of their respective husbands?

The point of debate is about whether women should continue to remain entangled in a never-ending competition in flaunting their bodies and stirring up the physical and carnal desires of men, or whether these issues should be uprooted from the social environment and restricted to the familial and matrimonial milieu. Islam advocates the latter plan and ḥijāb can be looked upon as a part of this agenda, whereas the Westerners support the former plan!

Islam avers that all such physical pleasures - sexual intercourse as well as those derived by means of sight, hearing and touch - are specific to the husbands, and anything beyond this is a sin which leads to pollution and impurity within the society.

The philosophy behind ḥijāb is indeed evident since:

1. Nudity of women, which is quite naturally accompanied by adornment and coquettishness puts men, especially the youths, in a state of perpetual stimulation - a stimulation which affects their nerves, generates within them pathological nervous excitement and

at times even brings about psychological disorders. There is a limit to the burden of excitement which the human nerves can endure. Don't all the psychologists caution that perpetual excitement leads to disorders and diseases?

This is especially in view of the fact that the sexual impulse is the strongest and the most profound of all impulses within man and, all through the ages, has been the cause of destructive events and horrendous offences, to the extent that people have gone on to say: You shall not come across any important event (in history), except that a woman has played a part in it!

Is the continuous provocation of this impulse by means of nudity, and intensifying it, not tantamount to playing with fire? Is this act wise and prudent?

Islam desires that Muslim men and women should possess a soul that is calm, nerves that are composed, and eyes and ears that are pure, and this is one of the philosophies of ḥijāb.

2. Substantiated and conclusive statistics reveal that with the rise in nudity, the world has correspondingly witnessed a continuous rise in divorces and matrimonial separations. This is because "whatever the eyes see, the heart covets"; and whatever the heart (which here means the errant and wild desires) covets, it seeks to obtain it at any cost. Therefore, every new day the heart gets attracted to one and bids farewell to another.

In an environment where ḥijāb is prevalent (together with adherence to the other Islamic conditions), the husband and wife belong to each other and their sentiments, love and feelings are exclusively for one another.

But in the 'free market of nudity' wherein women have been practically transformed into a commodity of mutual use - (at least in issues other than sexual intercourse) - the sanctity of a matrimonial alliance becomes meaningless, and families, similar to a spider's web, swiftly break apart and the children are left without guardians.

3. The increase in indecency and obscenity, and the escalation in the number of illegitimate children are the most painful consequences of non-observance of ḥijāb – a fact which, in our opinion, does not require any figures and statistics; and the reasons for this, especially in the Western society, are so very apparent so as to eliminate the need for any mention.

We do not say that non-observance of ḥijāb is the sole and fundamental cause of obscenities and illegitimate children, nor do we say that colonialism and destructive political issues have not had any contribution to it; rather, what we wish to state is that the issue of nudity and non-observance of ḥijāb is as one of the instrumental and effective factors for those evils.

In view of the fact that 'indecency', and worse than this, 'illegitimate children' were and are amongst the sources of various crimes in human societies, the dangerous dimension of this issue becomes all the more clear.

We perceive the gravity of the matter when we hear that, according to statistics[94], in the United Kingdom five hundred thousand illegitimate children are born every year and then when we hear that a group of British intellectuals has issued a warning to those in the echelons of power with respect to this ongoing trend. The warning is not motivated out of ethical or religious concerns but rather out of concern for the dangers these illegitimate children pose to the safety of the society, to the extent that their involvement is observed in numerous criminal dossiers. We (also) come to realize that even those who possess scant respect for religion or ethical issues consider the issue of the spread of indecency to be catastrophic. Thus, everything that serves to increase the sphere of physical immorality in human societies is a

[94] Please note that some of the statistics presented may be outdated as this work is a translation from a book which was originally published many years ago. (Ed.)

threat for their security, and the consequences – in whatever manner we may compute them - shall always be to their detriment.

Studies by educated scholars reveal that reduction of work, backwardness and lack of responsibility are most noticeably perceived in schools, which are co-educational in nature and in centres where males and females work together in an ambience of licentiousness and complete freedom.

4. The issue of 'obscenity of women' and 'humiliation of their personalities' also holds great importance and requires no statistics to prove it. When a society desires a woman with a bare body, it is quite obvious that day by day, it would demand increased beautification and augmented ostentation from her. In a society wherein a woman, due to her physical attraction, is utilized for promotion and publicity of products, as a decoration for the reception rooms, or as a tool for attracting tourists, her personality is reduced to that of a doll or a trivial and insignificant item, and her lofty human values are totally thrust into oblivion; ultimately, her only distinction and glory lies in her youth, beauty and self-exhibition.

Thus, she is transformed into a device for satisfying the carnal desires of a handful of individuals, who are polluted, deceptive and possess satanic attributes!

In such a society, how is it possible for a woman to manifest herself in the light of her knowledge, awareness, sagacity and moral traits, and to occupy a lofty rank and status?

It is indeed painful that in the Western and West-stricken countries, and in our country (too) before the Islamic Revolution, the maximum prominence, fame, repute, money, income and standing had been for the polluted and promiscuous women, who had come to acquire renown as 'artists and performers'. Wherever they went, the management of this polluted environment would scramble after them to welcome their presence!

Praise be to Allāh that the entire apparatus was annihilated and the female sex emerged from her previous triteness or her erstwhile standing as a cultural doll and an insignificant item, and salvaged her personality. She took for herself the veil without being secluded and isolated, presenting herself in every expedient and constructive arena of the society - even the battlefield - with the same veil and ḥijāb.

Criticisms Levelled by the Opponents of ḥijāb

At this point we come to the objections which are levelled by those opposing the veil and which need to be discussed, albeit concisely:

1. The most important thing which all of them support in unanimity and which they propound as the fundamental objection with respect to the issue of ḥijāb is that women constitute one half of the society but the ḥijāb pushes this multitude into seclusion thereby causing them to lag behind culturally and intellectually. Especially during the period of economic thriving, when there is a greater need for active human participation, this large female force would remain totally unutilized in the path of economic progress, not to speak of their lack of presence in social and cultural centres. Thus, they are transformed into a mere consumer that is a burden for the society.

But those who have resorted to this logic have either been totally oblivious of certain points, or have probably feigned lack of knowledge about them:

Firstly: Who says that the Islamic ḥijāb isolates a woman and distances her from the social arena? If, in the past, it had been necessary for us to exhaust ourselves in order to present proofs and arguments in defence of this issue, now, after the Islamic Revolution, there does not exist the slightest need for them, for with our own eyes we observe groups of women, in the Islamic ḥijāb, presenting themselves in all places - in offices, workstations, political rallies and demonstrations, on the radio and television, in

cultural and educational institutes, in hospitals and medical centres, especially for nursing those injured in war, and even in the battlefield against the enemies.

In short, the present state (of the Islamic society) is a fitting riposte to all these objections; if previously we spoke of the ‘possibility’ of such a state, today we find ourselves facing the ‘occurrence’ of it and philosophers have stated that the best proof for the ‘possibility (of occurrence)’ of a thing is the (actual) ‘occurrence’ of that thing, and this is something, which is too evident and manifest to require any explanation.

Secondly: Is managing the house, training and educating the youthful children and transforming them into individuals not a task? After all, through their strength and ability, the youths are able to set the gigantic wheels of the society into motion.

People who do not view this great mission of women positively are ill-informed of the role played by family and training in constructing a healthy, prosperous and dynamic society. They imagine that the (correct) manner is that our men and women, like those of the West should, at the first sign of daybreak, leave their houses for their places of work, either leaving their children in nurseries or locking them up in a room thereby making them taste the bitterness of imprisonment at a time when they are blooming buds. –They are totally oblivious of the fact that this approach not only shatters their personalities but also moulds them into soulless children, who are found to be lacking in human sentiments and affections, and who will eventually jeopardize the future of society.

Secondly: Another of their objections is that the ḥijāb is a cumbersome dress, which is not well suited for social activities, especially in the modern automobile age. What should a veiled woman look after - herself, her chador, her children or her work?

But these critics do not realise the fact that the ḥijāb does not always mean a chador, but rather it refers to a woman’s covering. If

the ḥijāb is possible by means of the chador, so much the better, but if not, then a covering is quite sufficient.

The womenfolk of our country, who engage in farming and live in villages - especially those who work in the rice-fields and perform the most important and difficult work of cultivating and harvesting the crop, have answered this objection, practically. They have shown that in numerous places a village-woman, while observing the Islamic ḥijāb, can work more than a man and better too - without the ḥijāb hampering or obstructing her work in the slightest.

Thirdly: Another objection which they level is that since ḥijāb establishes separation between men and women, it amplifies the greedy nature of man and instead of extinguishing it, only serves to inflame his covetousness, since:

أَلإِنْسَانُ حَرِيصٌ عَلىَ ماَ مُنِعَ.

“People covet that which is forbidden for them.”

A comparison of our present society in which the ḥijāb is prevalent in all places - without exception - with the one that prevailed during the period of the satanic regime, which used to force the women to take off their ḥijāb will provide the answer to this objection, or more correctly, this sophism and fallacy.

Those days, every alley and neighbourhood was a centre of wickedness and depravity, and an ambience of incredible immorality prevailed within the households. Divorces were rampant, the number of illegitimate children was staggering and there were a thousand other curses.

We do not claim that all of these have been eradicated, but they have undoubtedly been greatly reduced and our society, in this regard, has regained its well-being. And if, Allāh Willing, the state of affairs continues its course and all the other tangles come to order, our society, with respect to pureness of the households, and

preservation of the merit and worth of women, shall come to achieve a desired and ideal state.[95]

18. Why is the Inheritance of Men twice that of Women?

Although it appears that the inheritance of men is twice that of women, a closer look reveals that from one viewpoint, the inheritance of women is twice that of men! This is due to Islam's support for the rights of women.

Explanation

Islam has placed certain responsibilities upon men, as a result of which, virtually one half of their earnings is spent upon women whereas no such responsibilities have been placed upon women.

The male has to bear the expenses for all of his wife's needs such as housing, clothing, food and other necessities; apart from this, the expenses of his minor children are also to be provided by him, whereas the wife is exempt from every kind of payment, even if it is for her own self. Thus, a woman can stockpile her entire share of inheritance, whereas a man is bound to spend his share upon himself, his wife and children. Consequently, half of his earnings are effectively spent upon his wife and the other half is for him, whereas the entire share of the wife remains unused and intact.

For a better understanding, consider the following example: Suppose that the entire wealth existing globally is 30 billion tumans[96], which will be gradually distributed as inheritance amongst men and women (sons and daughters). When we compute the earnings of all men and women of the world by way of inheritance, we find that of this amount, the share of the men is 20 billion tumans while that of the women is 10 billion. However, as is customary, the women will marry, after which the responsibility of providing for their expenses will fall upon the shoulders of men and

[95] *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 14, pg. 442
[96] The currency used in Iran – at present (2005), one US Dollar is approximately 900 tuman.

so, the women can conveniently put their 10 billion tumans aside while, at the same time, be a partner to the men in their share of 20 billion, since this amount would be utilized by the men to provide for the expenses of their wives and their children.

Thus, in reality, half of the share of the men - totalling 10 billion tumans - would be spent on the women. This, in addition to the 10 billion tumans, which the women had placed aside, would collectively amount to 20 billion tumans - two-thirds of the (supposed) global wealth - whereas the men, effectively, do not use up more than 10 billion tumans for themselves.

In conclusion, the actual share of women, with respect to 'consumption and use', is twice the actual share of men, and this distinction is influenced by the fact that, generally, their ability and strength for generating earnings is less than that of men. This is a kind of just and logical support, which Islam has offered to the women, allotting a greater actual share for them although, ostensibly, their share appears to be one half (that of the males).

Incidentally, upon referring the Islamic sources we come to infer that the above query had plagued the minds of the people from the very onset of Islam.

Time and again they would question the Imams in this regard and their answers predominantly pointed to one meaning, which is: Allāh has placed upon the males the onus of bearing the wife's expenses and paying them the dower, and so, He has allotted them a greater share (from the inheritance).

In the book Maʿāniul Akhbār it has been reported that Imam ʿAlī b. Musa al-Riḍā عليه السلام in reply to this query, said: "The share of the females, in the inheritance, is half that of the males because when a female enters into marriage she receives something, while the male is obliged to give something. In addition, it is the responsibility of the males to shoulder the expenses of the females whereas the

females are neither responsible for their own expenses nor that of the males."[97]

19. Why is Blood Money for Women half that for Men?

Some individuals might possibly object that in the verses of qisās (retaliation) it has been ordered that a man should not be subjected to retaliation for the murder of a woman; but is a man superior to a woman? Why should a criminal, having killed a woman and shed unwarranted blood of a gender constituting more than half the global population, not be subjected to retaliation for his crime?

In answer to this it must be stated that the verse does not intend that a man should not face retaliation for killing a woman, rather - as has been explicitly explained in the Islamic jurisprudence - the guardians of the murdered woman can seek retaliation from the male murderer, but upon the condition that they pay half the blood money (to the heirs of the murder).

In other words, when it is said that a man cannot be subjected to retaliation for the murder of a woman, what is intended is 'unconditional retaliation'. However, if half of the blood money is paid, then it is permissible to have him killed in retaliation (for the crime committed by him).

There is no need to explain that the payment of the abovementioned sum for seeking retaliation is not because the woman is any less human than man or inferior to him. This is a perception which is totally misplaced and illogical, and perhaps the expression 'blood money' is the basis for this misleading notion. The payment of half the "blood money" is only to compensate the loss, which is suffered by his family, after the retaliation has been extracted.

[97] *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 3, pg. 290

Explanation

Predominantly, it is the men who are the instrumental members of households monetarily and who, by means of their activities, shoulder the expenses of their families. Thus, the difference between the death of a man and that of a woman, in financial terms, is something which is not concealed from anyone, and which, if not taken into account, would cause unjustified damage to be inflicted upon the survivors of the dead man and his innocent children. Hence, Islam, by stipulating the payment of half the blood money in the case of retaliation against a man, has taken into consideration the rights of all the individuals and has prevented this economic vacuum and irreparable blow to fall upon a family. Islam never permits that the rights of other individuals - like the children of the person facing retaliation – to be trampled under the pretext of the term 'equality'.

Of course, it is possible that some women may be higher earners for their families than men, but as we do know, rules and regulations are not determined by (a few) individuals but rather, the entire category of men is compared with the entire category of women (take note).[98]

20. What is the philosophy behind the dower for women?

In the Age of Ignorance, since the people did not attach any significance to the women, they would essentially place the dower of the women, which was their incontrovertible right, in the hands of their guardians and it was looked upon as the rightful property of the guardians. At times, they would even stipulate the dower of a woman to be the marriage of another woman; for example, a brother would give his sister in marriage to a person, who, in reciprocation, would marry his sister to him and this itself would be the dower of the two women.

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[98] *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 1, pg. 611

Islam abrogated all these unjust customs and, allocating the dower as a categorical right of the women, has repeatedly counselled the men, in the verses of the Qur᾿an, to strictly and completely respect this right of the women.

In Islam, no fixed amount has been ascertained for the dower and it is reliant upon the understanding reached between the two spouses. However, in numerous traditions it has been greatly emphasized to refrain from stipulating a weighty dower, but this is a ruling which is recommended, not obligatory.

At this point the question which arises is that both man and woman benefit equally from the matrimonial alliance – an alliance that is based on mutual benefits. This being the case, what is the need for man to pay a sum, large or small, as dower to the woman? Also, does this issue not deal a blow to the personality of the woman and impart an appearance of trade and transaction to marriage?

It is in the light of the above points that some individuals vehemently oppose the issue of dower, especially West-stricken ones, who derive their inspiration from the fact that dower is a custom, unconventional in the West. Whereas (the reality is that) not only does the excision of the dower not elevate the personality of a woman, rather, it serves to jeopardize her position.

Explanation: Admittedly, both man and woman derive equal benefits out of a matrimonial alliance. Nevertheless there is no denying the fact that in the event of a divorce, the woman has to sustain a greater loss, since:

Firstly: Man, due to his special physical ability, generally possesses a greater control and yields greater influence in the society. However much people may seek to deny this outright reality in the course of their discussions, the state of human social life which we observe with our own eyes - even in the European societies, wherein women enjoy the so-called total freedom - reveals that high earning jobs are principally held by men.

In addition, men possess greater options when embarking upon another spouse-selection, but this is not so in the case of widows - especially after witnessing some aging and being deprived of their assets of youth and beauty - since the options that lie before them, in selecting a new spouse, are greatly diminished.

Considering these aspects, it becomes evident that the conveniences and resources which a woman loses after marriage is much more than what a man loses and so, in actuality, the dower is something which serves to indemnify a woman's losses and a means for securing her future. Apart from this, the dower is also looked upon as a deterrent for man to seek separation and divorce.

Admittedly, the dower, according to the laws of Islam, becomes obligatory upon the husband as soon as the matrimonial alliance is entered into, and the wife is entitled to claim it from him immediately, but since it generally remains as an obligation upon the man, not only is it regarded as savings for her future but also a backing, which safeguards her rights and prevents the disintegration of her marriage alliance (of course exceptions do exist, but what we have stated holds true for the majority of the cases).

If there are people who have wrongly interpreted the dower as being a kind of 'price-tag' for the women, this meaning has no connection with Islam, for Islam has never looked upon the dower as a 'cost' or a 'price' of a commodity. The most excellent proof for this is the formula of marriage in which the 'man' and the 'woman' are officially looked upon as two fundamental parties of the marriage alliance whereas the dower is regarded as a surplus issue and is placed on the side-lines. It is for this reason that if, in the formula of marriage, the dower is not mentioned, the formula does not become void whereas if, in a transaction, the amount is not stipulated, it would definitely become null and void (of course, it should be noted that if the dower has not been stated in the formula of marriage, the husband, after the consummation of marriage, is

obliged to pay the wife mahr al-mithl (suitable dower), i.e. the dower, which is usually paid to women of similar and equal stature.)

From the above we conclude that the dower is a kind of 'compensation of loss' and 'backing to safeguard the rights of a woman' and not a 'rate' or a 'price-tag'; probably, the use of the word nihlah - meaning largesse - in verse 4 of Sūratul Nisā is an allusion to this very fact.[99]

21. How does Islam permit the physical punishment of women?

In verse 34 of Sūratul Nisā, we read:

﴿ وَ اللاَّتِي تَخَافُونَ نُشُوزَهُنَّ فَعِظُوهُنَّ وَ اهْجُرُوهُنَّ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ وَ اضْرِبُوهُنَّ ﴾

"And (as to) those on whose part you fear desertion, admonish them, and (if ineffective) leave them alone in the sleeping-places and (if even this proves futile with no way of compelling them into fulfilling their responsibilities, except the use of force, then) beat them."

The question that arises here is: How can Islam permit the physical punishment of a woman?

The answer to this objection, in light of this meaning of the verse, the traditions which discuss it, the explanations which have been presented in the books of jurisprudence and also the explanations which the psychologists offer today, is not very difficult, for:

Firstly: The verse sanctions physical discipline for those disobedient and irresponsible individuals for whom no other means have proved effective. Incidentally this is not an issue that is new and confined to Islam, rather, in all the laws of the world, when all peaceful and non-violent means to compel a person into fulfilling his obligations prove unproductive, there exist provisions to eventually resort to

[99] *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah,* vol. 3, pg. 263

force. This resort to force is not restricted to mere beatings, but at times even extends to severe punishments and on occasions going all the way up to the death penalty!

Secondly: The 'physical punishment' in this case - as has been mentioned in books of jurisprudence - should be mild and moderate so as not to cause breakage of bones, injuries or (for that matter, even) bruises.

Thirdly: Modern psychoanalysts are of the belief that a segment of the female populace possesses masochistic tendencies and when this state intensifies within them, the only way to calm them down is by means of mild physical punishment. Therefore, it is possible that the physical punishment has been prescribed taking (the state of) such individuals into consideration, for in their case, this mild physical penalty would be lenitive in nature and serve as a kind of psychological remedy for them.

Without any doubt, if any one of these steps (mentioned in the verse) proves effective and the woman embarks upon performing her duties, the man has no right to inconvenience her and it is for this reason that the latter portion of the verse states:

﴿ فَإِنْ أَطَعْنَكُمْ فَلاَ تَبْغُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ سَبِيلاً ﴾

"Then if they obey you, do not seek a way against them."

If it is asked: Such rebelliousness, violation and recalcitrance are also likely to be displayed by the men; would the males then be subjected to such punishments too? The answer to this is in the affirmative. In the event of their shirking their responsibilities, men too, like the women, face retribution and even physical punishment; the only difference being that, since this is something beyond the ability of women, it is the duty of the Islamic judge to utilize various means - even taʿzīr (physical punishment) - to make such violators become aware and heedful of their responsibilities.

The incident of the man, who had victimized his spouse and who, under no circumstances, had been willing to submit before the truth whereupon ʿAlī ﷺ with harshness and threat of the sword, forced him into submission, is well-known.

﴿ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيًّا كَبِيراً ﴾

"Surely Allāh is High, Great."

Finally the verse again cautions the men from abusing their positions as guardians of their respective households, and exhorts them to reflect upon Allāh's Power, which is above all powers, for surely Allāh is High, Great.[100]

22. Why are men permitted to have more than one spouse whereas the women are not?

The Noble Qurʾan has permitted polygamy (but, with strict conditions and within prescribed limits) and here we have to face up to a barrage of objections and assaults of the opponents, who, armed with a cursory study and influenced by imprudent sentiments, have set out to oppose this Islamic ruling. The Westerners, in particular, tend to criticize us by saying that Islam has permitted the males to create a harem and take for themselves an unlimited number of spouses. As a matter of fact, Islam has neither permitted the construction of harems - as they take it to mean - nor has it permitted unconditional and unqualified polygamy.

Explanation: Studying the conditions that prevailed in different regions before the onset of Islam, we infer that unreserved polygamy was a routine affair in those days even to the extent that on some occasions, when the polytheists would convert into Muslims they would have in their possession around ten spouses. Thus, multiplicity of wives is not an invention of Islam; on the contrary, Islam has confined it within the framework of the

[100] *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 3, pg. 373

necessities of human life and qualified it by means of strict conditions.

Islamic laws are determined on the basis of the actual needs of humans and not on the basis of external propaganda and ill-considered sentiments. The issue of polygamy too has been given consideration from this angle. This is because none can deny the fact that men, in the various goings-on of life, are more exposed to peril than the women, and they are the ones, who predominantly bear the brunt of actual casualties in battles and other catastrophes.

It cannot also be denied that the sexual life-span of men is more than that of women since women, at a certain age lose their sexual strength whereas men do not.

In addition, during menstruation and certain phases of pregnancy the women are obliged to observe a restriction of sexual activity whereas the men have no such restrictions.

Apart from all the above there are women who, due to various reasons, lose their husbands and are usually not sought by the men as a first-wife, and in the absence of polygamy, they would always have to remain without a spouse; we read in numerous newspapers that this group of widowed women, due to the restrictions placed upon the issue of polygamy, complain of the tangles of life and regard this curb as a kind of sentimental oppression which they are subjected to.

Taking these realities into consideration, in such instances wherein the balance between men and women is disrupted due to certain factors, we are left with no option except to select one of the following three alternatives:

1. Men should, at all times, content themselves with just one spouse, while the extra women should remain without a spouse for the rest of their lives, suppressing and killing all their innate needs and internal desires.

2. Men should have only one official and legal spouse, but are permitted to establish illicit physical relationships with women, who are without spouses, and keep them as mistresses and paramours.

3. Those, who possess the means, should be permitted to govern more than one spouse. Individuals, who would not be inconvenienced physically, economically and ethically, and who possess the ability to maintain equity and even handedness amongst all their spouses and children, should be permitted to take more than one spouse for themselves.

Undoubtedly, there exists no other alternative than these three.

If we were to choose the first alternative, we would have to wage a battle against human innate instincts and spiritual requirements, and disregard these sentiments and feelings of the women - a battle which we would never win. On the assumption that this scheme is actually put into practice, the inhumane aspect associated with it is something which is clear for everyone to see.

In other words, when necessary, this issue should not always be scrutinized from the viewpoint of the first wife but should also be analyzed from the standpoint of the second wife. Those who consider polygamy to be the cause of the sufferings of the first wife, view this issue from only one perspective. It ought to be studied from three perspectives - from the standpoint of the male, the first spouse and the second spouse, and the issue should be judged after taking into regard the interests and well-being of all three of them.

As for the second alternative, if we were to select it, we would have to legalize and formalize prostitution. In addition, the women, who are kept as mistresses and used for sexual gratification, would neither have any security nor a future for themselves, and their status would be ruined, and these are things that no rational person should ever accept.

Thus, the only alternative that remains is the third one, which not only responds positively to the innate desires and the inherent needs of the women, but it also keeps women away from the evil consequences of prostitution. It prevents disruption of the lives of this group of women and thus serves to protect society from a multitude of sins.

It must be noted that although polygamy is a social necessity in certain instances and is one of the incontestable rulings of Islam, fulfilling the conditions necessary for it in the present times differs vastly from that of the past. In the simple and Spartan life of the past, it was easy for everyone to maintain equity amongst the spouses but in the present times, those who wish to make use of this ruling must ensure that comprehensive equity is observed. Basically, polygamy should not be pursued for the sake of carnal and physical desires.

Interestingly, the very opponents of polygamy (such as the Westerners), during the course of history, have encountered events that have clearly manifested their need for it. For example, after World War II, the need for polygamy was intensely felt in the war-torn countries, especially Germany, which even compelled some of their intellectuals to reconsider their views with respect to the prohibition of polygamy. In addition, they conducted a study of the Islamic program of multiplicity of wives from al-Azhar University. However, severe objections on the part of the Church forced them to shelve their plans; the consequence of which was wild and outrageous profligacy that eventually engulfed the length and breadth of the war-torn countries.

Apart from the above, the inclination of some of the men to possess more than one spouse is something that cannot be denied, although if it were to arise as a result of carnal desires, it is not to be taken into regard. A wife's inability to conceive and the husband's intense desire to have a child provide a rational support to such an inclination. There may be instances where the inability of the wife

to satisfy the intense sexual desires of the husband leaves him with no alternative except to turn towards a second marriage – at times even compelling him to resort to illegitimate means to achieve his objective in the absence of legitimate ones. Hence, in cases such as these, his inclination cannot be regarded as being illogical or irrational. It is for this reason that even in countries that prohibit polygamy, in reality, relationships with several women are widely prevalent whereby one male tends to have illicit relationships with several women at the same time.

The well-known French historian Gustav Lebon considers the issue of Islamic polygamy, which is bound and limited by conditions, to be one of the distinguishing features of this religion. Comparing it with the free and illicit relationship of a male with several females in Europe, he states: In the West too, despite the fact that the weather and natural environment do not warrant such a custom (polygamy), monogamy is something that we come across only in books of law! For, I do not suppose that the presence of traces of this custom, in our actual socialization, can be denied! Honestly, I am at a loss and fail to comprehend what the legal, but confined, polygamy of the East lacks in comparison to the phoney polygamy of the West? In fact, I declare that the former is better and more seemly than the latter, in every respect.[101]

Of course it is not to be denied that some of the so-called Muslims, without taking into regard the Islamic ideology behind this rule, have sought to misuse it, maintaining ignominious harems for themselves and violating the rights of their wives. This flaw is not in the law but rather in the individuals themselves, and their deeds should not be regarded as the laws of Islam. Is there any law, which, despite its excellence, is not put to misuse by profiteering individuals for their personal benefit?

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[101] *Le Civilisation des Arabes* (*Tārīkh-e-Tamaddun-e-Islām Wa Arab*), translated by Fakhr Gilaani, pg. 509

Question: At this juncture some may question that if women find themselves in the abovementioned circumstances; would they be permitted to take two husbands for themselves too?

The answer to the above question is not very difficult:

Firstly: (Contrary to what is popular among the general public) the sexual desire in men is several times more than that in women; books relating to sexual issues state frigidity to be the disorder which is prevalent in the majority of women whereas, in the case of men, it is just the opposite. Even with respect to animals it has been observed that sexual advancements are usually initiated by the males of the species.

Secondly: Polygamy, in the case of men, does not entail any social or legal complications whereas, if the women were to possess two husbands, it would lead to numerous problems - the simplest of them being the issue of genealogy of the child, for it would not be known to which of the husbands it belongs, and such a child would certainly not be cared for and supported by any of the husbands. Some of the scholars are of the opinion that a child, whose father's identity is unknown, tends to be less loved and cared for by the mother. Thus, such children find themselves deprived and denied with respect to love and affection, and unclear about their legal rights.

It may perhaps be unnecessary to mention that resorting to contraceptives such as pills or the like can never yield certainty or confidence that a child will not be conceived, for there have been innumerable instances where women, who have used them or made mistakes while using them, have conceived children. Thus, no woman can, by trusting and relying upon such measures, take multiple spouses for herself.

Due to these factors polygamy, in the case of women, cannot be rational, whereas in the case of men, after observing its conditions, it is not only logical, but practical too.[102]

23. What is meant by 'justice' as mentioned in the conditions (to be considered) with respect to polygamy?

In verse 3 of SūratulNisā, we read:

﴿ فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلاَّ تَعْدِلُوا فَوَاحِدَةً ﴾

"...but if you fear that you will not do justice (between them), then (marry) only one."

Similarly, in verse 129 of this same chapter, we read:

﴿ وَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيعُوا أَنْ تَعْدِلُوا بَيْنَ النِّسَاءِ وَ لَوْ حَرَصْتُمْ ﴾

"And you have it not in your power to do justice between wives, even though you may wish (it)."

The question that arises here is: What is meant by 'justice' with respect to multiple wives? Is this 'justice' associated with issues of life like sleeping together, gifting items and things, and providing ease and comfort, or is it associated with respect to the heart and human sentiments too?

Without any doubt justice, with respect to affections and sentiments of the heart, is something that is beyond the control of man. Who possesses the ability to exercise total control over his affection – a state, which is governed by factors external to himself? It is for this reason that Allāh has not considered the observance of this kind of justice to be obligatory and in verse 129 of this chapter says:

[102] *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 3, pg. 256

﴿ وَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيعُوا أَنْ تَعْدِلُوا بَيْنَ النِّسَاءِ وَ لَوْ حَرَصْتُمْ ﴾

"And you have it not in your power to do justice between wives, (with respect to sentimental inclinations) even though you may wish (it)."

Thus, till such time that the internal sentiments do not result in granting preference to some of the spouses over the others in actions, it is not prohibited. What is obligatory upon a man is to maintain justice amongst the spouses with respect to issues that are practical and external in dimension.

From the above explanation it becomes plain that those, who have sought to correlate the above verse:

﴿ فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلاَّ تَعْدِلُوا فَوَاحِدَةً ﴾

with verse number 129:

﴿ وَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيعُوا أَنْ تَعْدِلُوا بَيْنَ النِّساءِ وَ لَوْ حَرَصْتُمْ ﴾

and thus conclude that polygamy is totally forbidden in Islam, have made a grave error. – They have argued that the first verse places the condition of 'justice', while the second verse considers this justice to be an impossible task for the men.,

As has been referred to previously, the kind of justice, whose observance is beyond the ability of man, is that which is associated with the internal sentiments, and this is not one of the requirements for polygamy; the condition for polygamy is the justice which is associated with acts and deeds.

Testifying to this aspect is the latter part of the verse 129 of this same chapter, which says:

﴿ فَلا تَمِيلُوا كُلَّ الْمَيْلِ فَتَذَرُوها كَالْمُعَلَّقَةِ ﴾

"Now that you cannot observe justice with respect to your sentiments between your spouses, at least do not direct all your

sentimental inclinations towards one, leaving the other in suspense."

Consequently, people who have taken one part of this verse and abandoned the other part, have erred in the issue of polygamy and it is a cause for astonishment for every researcher.103

Incidentally, according to Islamic traditions, it appears that the first person to raise this objection was Ibn Abi al-ʿAujā - one of the materialists and a contemporary of Imam as-Ṣādiq عليه السلام - who argued over it with Hishām b. Ḥakam, the diligent Islamic scholar. Not finding the answer to it, Hishām started out from his city, Kufah, towards Madīnah and approached Imam as-Ṣādiq عليه السلام. The Imam عليه السلام was greatly astonished to see him in Madīnah at a time when it was not the season for Ḥajj and ʿUmrah. Hishām presented his question, whereupon the Imam عليه السلام said: "The justice intended in verse 3 of Sūratul Nisā is the justice associated with the maintenance of the spouses (and observation of their rights, and the manner of conduct and behaviour) whereas the justice in verse 129, which has been regarded as an impossible task, is the justice associated with internal sentiments (thus, polygamy, with adherence to the Islamic conditions, is neither prohibited nor impossible)."

After returning from his journey, when Hishām presented Ibn Abi al-ʿAujā with the answer he swore that it was not Hishām's answer but somebody else's.[104]

It is quite evident that if we are interpreting the term 'justice' differently in the two verses it is because of the clear context that is present in both the verses. The verse under discussion clearly states: Do not direct all your inclinations towards one spouse, and has thus permitted the selection of two spouses, but on the condition that, despite the difference in internal inclinations, no injustice should be

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[103] *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 3, pg. 255
[104] *Tafsīr al-Burhān*, vol. 1, pg. 420

done to the other with respect to actions and deeds. Besides, the initial portion of verse 3 of this same chapter expressly permits polygamy.[105]

24. What is the philosophy behind temporary marriage?

It is a general and universal rule that if man's natural impulses are not satiated in the correct manner, he will resort to incorrect and devious means in order to satiate himself. In reality, the natural desires cannot be eliminated; and upon the supposition that they could be eliminated, such an act would not at all be rational for then it would be tantamount to opposing the laws of Creation.

Thus, the correct option would be to satiate them in a rational manner and utilize them constructively.

It cannot be denied that sexual desire is one of the strongest natural impulses existing within man to the extent that some of the psychoanalysts are of the opinion that it is the only primitive and primary impulse within man while all the other impulses are secondary in nature.

Now, in numerous circumstances and environments, a great number of individuals belonging to a particular age-group are unable to enter into a permanent marriage, or married individuals, who have embarked upon protracted journeys or other commitments, are faced with the dilemma of their sexual desires remaining unfulfilled. This issue has become especially acute in our times wherein the matrimonial age, due to the protracted period of education and other intricate social issues, has gone up and rarely can a youth enter into wedlock at a lower age during which he faces a period of heightened sexual tendencies.

What should be done in such circumstances?

Should the people be encouraged to suppress this impulse (like the monks and the nuns)?

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[105] *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 4, pg. 155

Or should they be left free to indulge in profligacy, and the ignominious and scandalous scenarios that presently exist be permitted?

Or that we should adopt a third alternative – one, which neither brings about the problems of a permanent marriage nor leads to sexual licentiousness?

In summary, permanent marriage, in itself, has never been able to cater to the sexual needs of all the sections of the society - neither in the past nor today. We stand at a crossing - either to permit 'prostitution' (just as the material world of today has endorsed it and has officially recognized it) or accept the idea of temporary marriage. Those who oppose both prostitution as well as temporary marriage have not presented a solution for this problem.

The blueprint of temporary marriage neither possesses the strict conditions that are associated with permanent marriage so as to be inharmonious with educational engagements or lack of financial affluence, nor does it lead to the harmful ways of sexual wantonness and prostitution.

Criticisms levelled against temporary marriage

However, there are certain objections and criticisms that need to be discussed, albeit concisely:

1. At times it is asked, what is the difference between 'temporary marriage' and 'prostitution'? Both of them can be considered to be prostitution in exchange for a certain sum of money. This kind of marriage is, in fact, a veil over prostitution and sexual pollution! The only difference between the two lies in the recitation of two simple sentences (recitation of the marriage formula.)

Answer: Those who make this criticism apparently do not have any awareness about the concept of temporary marriage. This is because temporary marriage, like permanent marriage, is governed by rules and ordinances. A woman entering into a temporary marriage must make herself available solely for this husband for the entire

duration of the marriage, and must necessarily observe the ʿIddah after the termination of the term. In other words, she has to refrain from entering into any kind of matrimony with any other male for a period of forty five days at least, so that it becomes clear in case she bears the child of the first person. The observance of this ʿIddah is obligatory upon her even if she had resorted to the use of contraceptives to prevent conception. If she happens to conceive, this child like the children that result from a permanent marriage, would have to be looked after and supported by the man, and all the rules that are associated with children would come to be associated with this child too. However, prostitution does not have any of these rulings associated with it. Can these two issues ever be compared with each other?

Of course, temporary marriage does differ from permanent marriage with respect to the issues of inheritance (between the temporary spouses)[106], maintenance, and some other rulings; however these differences do not place it on par with prostitution. In any event, temporary marriage is a form of marriage which possesses its own ordinances and stipulations.

2. Temporary marriage becomes a reason for some lustful individuals to misuse this ruling and use it as a pretext to indulge in every kind of prostitution and profligacy; consequently respectable individuals never enter into it while women of good repute tend to avoid it.

Answer: Is there any law in the world that has not been abused? Should a rule, which is a social requirement and is in accordance with the human innate, be suppressed because of it being misused, or should those, who misuse it, be taken to task?

Supposing some individuals misuse the pilgrimage to the House of Allāh and engage themselves in peddling drugs in the course of

[106] Nevertheless, the children resulting from a temporary marriage do not differ in any manner whatsoever from those resulting from a permanent marriage.

their trip; should the people be prevented from participating in this great Islamic congregation or should those, who misuse the occasion, be brought to justice?

If we observe that nowadays respectable individuals experience an aversion with respect to this Islamic statute, the fault lies not in the statute but in those who act upon it, or to put it more correctly, in those who misuse it. If, in our present day society, temporary marriage were to be portrayed in its correct form and the Islamic government were to implement it under the governance of specific rules and stipulations, not only would its misuse be prevented but even respected individuals (during social exigencies) would not experience an aversion towards it.

3. They say: Temporary marriage results in guardian-less individuals, such as illegitimate children, being handed out to the society.

Answer: In view of what we have mentioned previously, the answer to this objection is quite plain since according to (man-made) law, illegitimate children are neither affiliated to the father nor to the mother whereas children resulting from temporary marriage do not possess the slightest difference from those that result from permanent marriage - neither with respect to inheritance nor with respect to social rights and privileges - apparently this objection stems from their lack of attention towards this reality.

Russell and temporary marriage

In conclusion it appears expedient to present what Bertrand Russell, the well-known English scholar, has stated in his book Marriage and Morals under the topic Trial Marriage. After mentioning the scheme of Ben B. Lindsey, one of the judges for juvenile delinquency, in connection with 'companionate marriage', he states as follows:

"His view is that young people should be able to enter upon a new kind of marriage distinguished from ordinary marriage by 3 characteristics. First, that there should be for the time being no

intention of having children and that accordingly the best available birth-control information should be given to the young couple. Second, that so long as there are no children and the wife is not pregnant divorce should be possible by mutual consent. And third, that in the event of divorce, the wife should not be entitled to alimony."

After mentioning Lindsay's idea, which was presented above, Russell goes on to state as follows: He holds, and I think rightly, that if such an institution were established by law, a very great many young people, for example, students at universities, would enter upon comparatively permanent partnerships, involving a common life, and free from the Dionysiac characteristics of their present sex relations.[107]

As you notice, the above plan with respect to temporary marriage is in many ways similar to the Islamic concept of temporary marriage except that the conditions and stipulations which Islam has laid out for it are more lucid and perfect in various respects. In the Islamic temporary marriage there is no prohibition in preventing conception, separation is simple and alimony too is not obligatory.[108]

25. Did temporary marriage exist during the time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ?

The general consensus of the Islamic scholars indicates that temporary marriage was lawful during the initial period of Islam and, in fact, the essentials of religion too emphasize this lawfulness - (and the difference of opinion that exists in connection with verse 24 of Sūratul Nisā):

[107] Marriage and Morals, pg. 84
[108] *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 3, pg. 341

﴿ فَمَا اسْتَمْتَعْــتُمْ بِهِ مِنْهُنَّ فَآتُوهُنَّ أُجُورَهُنَّ فَرِيضَةً ﴾

"Then as to those whom you profit by, give them their dowries as appointed."

as to whether or not it establishes the legitimacy of mutʿah does not, in any way, serve to oppose the incontrovertible nature of the statute. This is because even the opponents are of the belief that the legitimacy of this statute has been established by means of the sunnah of the Noble Prophet ﷺ – and the Muslims, during the initial stages of Islam, even acted upon this ruling. Also, the famous sentence that has been reported from ʿUmar:

مُتْعَتَان كَانَتَا عَلَى عَهْدِ رَسُولِ اللّٰهِ ﷺ أَنَا مُحَرِّمُهُماَ وَ أُعَاقِبُ عَلَيْهِمَا مُتْعَةُ النِّسَاءِ وَ مُتْعَةُ الْحَجِّ.

"Two mutʿahs existed during the time of the Prophet of Allāh and I prohibit them and shall punish (those who act upon them), (and these are) mutʿah of the women and Ḥajj of Tamattuʿ), is a clear proof of the existence of this statute during the period of the Noble Prophet ﷺ; however, the opponents of this ruling claim that it was abrogated and prohibited later on."[109]

Interestingly, the traditions which they present to substantiate their claims of abrogation are contradictory and inconsistent. Some traditions state that the Noble Prophet ﷺ himself abrogated this statute and as such, the nullifier of this ruling would be the sunnah of the Noble Prophet ﷺ. Other traditions state that it was abrogated by the verse of Divorce:

[109] *Kanz al-ʿIrfān*, vol. 2, pg. 158. In *Tafsīr Qurṭubī* and *Tafsīr Tabarī*, a tradition similar to the abovementioned tradition has been mentioned. It has also found a mention in 'The Chapter Of Nikah' in vol. 7 of *Sunan of Beḥaqī.*

﴿ لِعِدَّتِهِنَّ إِذا طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَطَلِّقُوهُنَّ ﴾

"O Prophet! when you divorce women, divorce them for their prescribed time."

However, it ought to be known that this verse has no connection with the issue under discussion since this verse deals with divorce whereas there is no divorce in a temporary marriage - the separation taking place when the term (of marriage) reaches termination.

On the one hand, it is conclusively and categorically known that this ruling was lawful during the time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ while on the other hand there is authentic evidence to prove that it had been abrogated. Thus, according to an indisputable law, proved in methodology, we shall judge that this statute continues to exist.

The well-known sentence of ʿUmar is also a clear testimony of the fact that this ruling had certainly not been abrogated during the period of the Noble Prophet ﷺ.

It is quite evident that none, except the Noble Prophet ﷺ, possesses the authority to abrogate laws and rulings, and it is only he ﷺ, who can abrogate and annul certain laws in accordance with divine orders. After the Noble Prophet's death, the door to abrogation of laws was completely closed or else every person, according to his individual reasoning, would seek to abrogate portions of the divine laws and consequently there would be no such thing as an eternal and everlasting Shariʿah. Fundamentally, individual reasoning vis-à-vis explicit sayings of the Noble Prophet ﷺ lacks validity and authenticity.

Significantly, in the book Ṣaḥīḥ Tirmidhī, which is one of well-known Ṣiḥāḥ of the Ahlus Sunnah, and also from al-Daraqutnī[110], we are informed of the following incident:

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[110] *Tafsīr Qurṭubī*, vol. 2, pg. 762, under verse 195 of *Sūratul Baqarah*.

Once, an inhabitant from Syria approached ʿAbdullāh b. ʿUmar and questioned him about Ḥajj-e-Tamattuʿ, whereupon he expressly declared it to be permissible. The man said: "But your father has prohibited it!" ʿAbdullāh b. ʿUmar turned furious and said: "If my father prohibits it while the Noble Prophet ﷺ permits it, should I forsake the sacred sunnah of the Noble Prophet ﷺ and follow my father's statements? Arise and go away from my presence!"[111]

Another tradition, possessing the same form as that seen in the above tradition, has also been reported from ʿAbdullāh b. ʿUmar, but in connection with temporary marriage.[112]

It has been reported from the book 'Muhādhirāt' of Rāghib that one of the Muslims entered into a temporary marriage. He was asked: "Who informed you that it was legitimate?" He replied: "ʿUmar!" Astonished, they asked him: "How is such a thing possible when ʿUmar has himself prohibited it and has even threatened to punish the people for it?" He said: "I too base my reasoning upon this, for ʿUmar had said: 'The Noble Prophet ﷺ had permitted it but I prohibit it.' I accept its legitimacy from the Noble Prophet ﷺ but shall never accept its prohibition from anyone else!"[113]

Another point that needs to be mentioned here is that those, who claim that this rule has been abrogated, face some serious problems:

Firstly: In numerous traditions from Sunni sources it has been explicitly stated that this ruling had not been abrogated during the

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[111] The Mutʿah of Ḥajj that ʿUmar had prohibited was the Ḥajj-e-tamattuʿ. Ḥajj-e-Tamattuʿ is that initially a person enters a state of iḥrām and after performing the rites of ʿUmrah comes out of his iḥram, (whereupon everything, even sexual intercourse, becomes permissible for him) after which, he once again goes into the state of iḥrām and performs the rites of Ḥajj from the 9th of Dhul Hijjah. In the Age of Ignorance, the people considered this to be incorrect and would be given to astonishment over the fact that a person, having entered Mecca during the season of Ḥajj, performs his ʿUmrah and comes out of his iḥrām, before having performed his Ḥajj. But Islām expressly declared such an act to be lawful and this has been asserted in verse 186 of Sūratul Baqarah.

[112] *Sharh Lumʿah*, vol. 2, 'The Book of Nikah'

[113] *Kanz al-ʿIrfān*, vol. 2, pg. 159 (footnote)

life-time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ but, rather, its prohibition came into effect during the time of ʿUmar. Thus, the proponents of abrogation need to provide an explanation for all these traditions, which are twenty four in number. ʿAllāmah Aminī has mentioned them in detail in volume six of his book al-Ghadīr and two examples of them are presented below:

1. It has been reported in Ṣaḥīḥ Tirmidhī that Jābir b. ʿAbdullāh Anṣārī said: "During the time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ we used to easily enter into temporary marriage and this continued till ʿUmar totally prevented ʿAmr b. Ḥārith from entering into it."[114]

2. In the books Muwatta of Mālik and Sunan Kubrā of Behaqi it has been reported from ʿUrwah b. Zubaīr that one day, a lady by the name of Khaulah Bint Ḥakīm approached ʿUmar and informed him that one of the Muslims, Rabīʿ b. Umayyah, had committed mutʿah. Hearing this ʿUmar said: "Had I prohibited this act previously, I would have had him stoned (but now, from this very moment, I shall prohibit it)."[115]

In the book Bidāyah al-Mujtahid of Ibn Rushd al-Andulusī too we read that Jābir b. ʿAbdullāh Anṣārī said: "Temporary marriage was customary and usual amongst us during the time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, during the caliphate of Abu Bakr and (the first) half of the caliphate of ʿUmar. Afterwards ʿUmar prohibited it."[116]

Secondly: The traditions that state that this ruling had been abrogated during the life-time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ are ambivalent and contradictory in nature. Some of them say that it was abrogated in the battle of Khaibar, some report it to have been abrogated on the day of the conquest of Makkah, some others specify that it was during the battle of Tabuk, while yet others declare that it took place during the battle of Autās, etc. Thus, all of

[114] *al-Ghadīr*, vol. 6, pg. 206
[115] *al-Ghadīr*, vol. 6, pg. 210
[116] *Bidāyah al-Mujtahid*, The Book of Nikāh

these traditions, which advocate the abrogation of this ruling, appear to be fabricated as they differ so vastly from each other.

In view of what we have mentioned above, it becomes plain that the statement of the author of the commentary al-Manār, when he says: "Previously, in the third and fourth volume of the magazine al-Manār, we had expressly stated that it was ʿUmar, who had prohibited mutʿah, but later we happened to come across some traditions, which indicated that it had been abrogated during the time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ and not during the time of ʿUmar, and accordingly, we rectify our previous statements and seek forgiveness for it[117] is a prejudiced declaration. This is because vis-à-vis these contradictory traditions that declare the abrogation to have taken place during the time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, we have traditions, which expressly declare the ruling to have continued till the time of ʿUmar. Thus, neither is there a necessity to apologize nor a need to seek forgiveness; the evidences presented above indicate that it was the original declaration of the author that had been true and correct, and not his second one!"

It is evident that neither ʿUmar nor anyone else - not even the Imams of the Ahlul Bayt عليهم السلام, who are the genuine successors of the Noble Prophet ﷺ - can abrogate laws that had existed during the life-time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ. Basically, abrogation after the death of the Noble Prophet ﷺ and the termination of revelation is absolutely meaningless and inconceivable. It is also a matter of immense astonishment that some individuals attribute the utterance of ʿUmar to his 'individual reasoning' (ijtihād), for ijtihād vis-à-vis 'naṣṣ' (explicit text of the Noble Prophet ﷺ) is neither permissible nor acceptable.[118]

[117] *Tafsīr al-Manār*, vol. 5, pg. 16
[118] *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 3, pg. 337

26. What is the philosophy behind Muhallil?

After the third divorce, the man and the woman must separate from each other forever; however, if the woman enters into matrimony with another man and, after the consummation of this marriage, procures divorce from him, she can then marry the first husband again if she so desires. The question which arises here is: What is the philosophy behind this Islamic ruling?

In specific circumstances divorce, like marriage, becomes a crucial and essential issue and it is for this reason that Islam has permitted it. But, since division and break-up of families tend to inflict irreparable harm on the individuals and the society, Islam adopts various means in order to prevent the occurrence of divorce to the maximum extent possible - the issue of ‘another marriage’ or muḥallil being one of these means.

This is because a woman’s official marriage with another man, after having been divorced three times, is a great deterrent for pronouncing repetitive divorces (on the part of the husband). A man who intends to divorce his wife for the third time knowing fully well that with this divorce she would get married to someone else, forever, would find his conscience being pricked and, till the time he is certain that there exists no other alternative, he will not embark on such an act.

In reality, the issue of muḥallil or to put it more correctly, ‘a woman’s second permanent marriage with another man’ is an impediment placed before capricious and deceptive males so that they do not take women to be playthings for their wanton desires, and misuse the ruling of ‘divorce and return’.

The conditions stipulated for this second marriage – one of them being that it should be a permanent marriage - indicate that this second alliance has not been stipulated for the purpose of providing the woman and the first husband with an opportunity to get

together again; thus, this ruling cannot be misused by entering into a temporary marriage in order to remove the impediment.

A tradition, which some of the commentators have mentioned, serves to greatly elucidate the point. According to this tradition those, who misuse this ruling by arranging a marriage alliance so that the woman, by means of this marriage, can return to her first husband, are distanced away from Allāh's mercy.

لَعَنَ اللّٰهُ الْمُحَلِّلَ وَ الْمُحَللَ لَهُ.

"Allāh curses the 'muḥallil', and the person for whom this person has endeavoured to act as a 'muḥallil'."[119]

Thus, it ought to be said that the objective is to separate the man and the woman after three divorces by means of this marriage, so that each of them can lead a life as desired by him or her and to prevent matrimony - an issue, extremely hallowed - from occasionally becoming a victim of the satanic inclinations of the first husband.

However, since Islam has always respected rational and logical desires, and utilizes every reformative opening that exists, it says: If this (second) alliance happens to break down too and the former spouses develop attachment with respect to each other and have seriously resolved to fulfil their familial responsibilities, there is no harm if they come together. This new marriage lifts the prohibition from over them and this is why it has been named as 'muḥallil'.

It therefore becomes clear that muḥallil has not been presented in Islam as just an issue or a ruling but rather it speaks of a new marriage, a concept which, in addition to the Qurʾanic verse, is also inferred from the traditions of the infallibles عليهم السلام.

After studying the issue, another point which comes to the fore is that the issue of new marriage is serious and in sincere earnest. But if someone, from the very outset, had not intended to marry the

[119] *Tafsīr al-Manār*, vol. 2

woman permanently, only enacting a role in order to present an appearance of a muḥallil (so that the woman acquires the excuse to return to her former husband), such a marriage would serve no purpose since in such a case, not only would the second marriage be null and void but in addition, the first husband would also never become legitimate for the woman and the previously mentioned tradition:

لَعَنَ اللّٰهُ الْمُحَلِّلَ وَ الْمُحَللَ لَهُ.

probably alludes to this kind of muḥallil.[120]

27. What is the philosophy behind the observance of 'Iddah?

In verse 228 of Sūratul Baqarah, we read:

﴿ وَ الْمُطَلَّقاتُ يَتَرَبَّصْنَ بِأَنْفُسِهِنَّ ثَلاثَةَ قُرُوءٍ ﴾

"And the divorced women should keep themselves in waiting for three courses."

The question that crops up here is: What is the philosophy behind this Islamic ruling?

Since the breaking up of families generally tends to inflict irreparable damage upon the fabric of a society, Islam has set stipulations which, till the maximum possible limit, seek to prevent such matrimonial break-ups. On the one hand it regards divorce as 'the most abominable of the permissible acts', while on the other hand, by referring the matrimonial disputes to the family courts established by the relatives, and initiating reconciliatory measures through the relatives of the disputing spouses, it has sought to prevent this occurrence.

One of these stipulations, which is itself a cause for delaying the divorce and weakening this matrimonial break-up, is the

[120] *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 2, pg. 123

observance of ʿIddah - the duration of which has been set to be three (قرء), which means to become clean, three times, from menstruation.

ʿIddah - A means for reconciliation and return

At times, due to certain factors, the mentality of a person comes to possess such a state that a small dispute inflames feelings of revenge so intense as to blanket the intellect and conscience, and predominantly, the division of a family occurs in these circumstances. However, it frequently happens that a short while after the dispute the husband and the wife come to their senses and repent for their actions, especially when they realize that they would have found themselves in great difficulty had their family broken up.

It is here that the verse, under discussion, states: The women must observe ʿIddah and remain patient till this wave passes by and the dark clouds of strife and animosity disperse from the skies of their lives.

In particular, the stipulation of Islam asking a woman to refrain from going out of the house during the period of ʿIddah serves to stimulate the faculty of reflection within her and is very effective in the betterment of her relationship with her husband.

And it is for this reason that we read in the first verse of Sūratul Ṭalāq:

﴿ لا تُخرِجُوهُنَّ مِنْ بُيُوتِهِنَّ وَ لاَ يَخرُجْنَ إلاَّ أَنْ يَأْتِينَ بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُبَيِّنَةٍ وَ تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللّٰهِ وَ مَنْ يَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَ اللّٰهِ فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهُ لا تَدْرِي لَعَلَّ اللّٰهَ يُحْدِثُ بَعْدَ ذٰلِكَ أَمْراً ﴾

"Do not drive them out of their houses, nor should they themselves go forth, unless they commit an open indecency; and these are the limits of Allāh, and whoever goes beyond the limits of Allāh, he indeed does injustice to his own soul. You do not know that Allāh may, after that, bring about reunion."

Usually, reminiscence of the warm and sweet moments of the life before divorce is sufficient to bring back the lost love and brighten the dimmed light of affection.

ʿIddah - A means to protect the generation

Another philosophy behind the ʿIddah is to make a woman cognizant of her state with respect to pregnancy. It must be admitted that although witnessing one phase of menstruation is usually indicative of absence of pregnancy in a woman, at times it has been observed that a woman, despite bearing a child, menstruates in the initial phase of her pregnancy and hence, in order to be absolutely sure that she does not bear a child from her previous husband, it has been ordered that she should witness three periods of menstruation after which she can enter into another marriage.[121]

[121] *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 2, pg. 106

PHILOSOPHY BEHIND SOME OF THE PROHIBITED ACTS OF ISLAM

28. What is the philosophy behind the prohibition of gambling?

It is very rare to find someone who is not acquainted with the various harms of gambling, and in order to further explain this fact, we present here, briefly, some of its evil consequences:

Gambling - The Premier cause of agitation and excitement

All psychologists are of the opinion that mental agitation and excitement is the principal cause for many diseases. For example, reduction in (body) vitamins, ulcers of the stomach, insanity, mild and severe nervous and psychological disorders and the like, often arise as a result of excitement - and the premier cause that brings about such excitement is gambling. An American scholar has stated: In this country alone, more than two thousand individuals die every year due to excitement and agitation arising as a result of gambling, and on average, the heart of a poker-player beats in excess of a hundred beats a minute. At times, gambling also triggers cardiac and cerebral apoplexy and is undoubtedly a factor which brings about early ageing.

Apart from what scholars have stated, a person who engages in gambling, finds that not only is his soul subjected to tension but also the tracts of his body come to possess an unusual and atypical state - his heartbeat increases, sugar level in the blood rises, there occurs a disruption in the secretion of the internal glands, the colour of his face pales and he suffers from a lack of appetite. Upon conclusion of the gambling bout and subsequent to a tensed battle of nerves he goes to bed, predominantly resorting to alcohol and drugs in order to soothe his nerves and calm his body. Therefore, the harm arising as a result of these ought to be added to that which arises directly as a consequence of gambling.

Another scholar has said: A gambler is a diseased person, who is in need of constant psychological attention. An effort should be made to make him comprehend that there exists a psychological vacuum, which propels him towards this reprehensible act, so that he embarks upon treating himself.

Connection between crime and gambling

One of the world's largest organisations dealing in statistics has established that thirty percent of all crimes are directly related to gambling, and it is also one of the factors which bring about seventy percent of offences.

The economic harms of gambling

During the course of a year, huge amounts of money are lost as a result of gambling, aside from the numerous man-hours that go down the drain as a result of it – even losing the enthusiasm to work during the rest of the time. For example, it has been stated in one report that in the city of Monte Carlo - one of the well-known gambling centres of the world - a person, in a gambling spree spread over a period of 19 hours, lost a sum of 4 million Iranian tumans. When the casino shut its doors he proceeded straight towards the woods where he shot himself in the head. The reporter adds that the woods of Monte Carlo have repeatedly witnessed incidents of suicides on the part of such devoted gamblers.

The social harms of gambling

Many gamblers, owing to the fact that they occasionally turn up winners and possibly pocket thousands of other people's money within a short time, are not inclined to enter into economic and manufacturing work as a result of which, the wheels of economy and production tend to become crippled in the corresponding ratio. If we inspect meticulously, we would realise that all the gamblers and their families are a burden upon the society, not only because they do not contribute the slightest benefit to it but, on the

contrary, they exploit it for their own benefit and at times resort to theft to make good the losses incurred by them during gambling.

In short, the evils of gambling are in such great measure that many of the non-Islamic nations have prohibited it by law, although they may extensively indulge in it in practice; for example, England prohibited it in 1853, the Soviet Union did so in 1855, the United States implemented the prohibition in 1854 while Germany followed suit in 1873.

At the end of this discussion it is interesting to note that according to statistics compiled by some researchers, 90 percent of all pick-pocketing instances, 10 percent of moral offences, 40 percent of assaults, 15 percent of sexual abuses, 30 percent of divorces and 5 percent of suicides are brought about by gambling.

If we were to present a definition for gambling, we would have to state: Gambling means sacrificing wealth and honour, for acquiring the riches of others by means of deception and craftiness, or, at times, for recreation - but not attaining either of the two objectives.[122]

29. What is music and what is the philosophy behind its prohibition?

There exists no difficulty and difference of opinion as far as the issue of prohibition of music is concerned, however, the difficulty lies in differentiating and discerning what constitutes music.

Are all pleasant and melodious sounds music?

Undoubtedly, this is not the case for it has been reported in the traditions that the Qurʾan and the adhān should be recited in a pleasant and melodious voice; in addition, the conduct of the Muslims too indicates likewise.

Is every such sound, which possesses tarjīʿ (coming and going of sound in the larynx, or technically speaking, rolling of the sound in it), music? This too is not established.

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[122] *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 2, pg. 76

The conclusion that can be drawn from the statements of the (Shīʿite) jurists and the Sunni scholars is that joyful tunes that are bacchanalian, frivolous and futile in nature are regarded as music.

Expressing it more clearly, tunes that are commensurate with immoral gatherings, and with corrupt and sinning individuals, are classified as music.

In other words a tune, which stirs up the carnal passions within man and he, in that state, considers consumption of intoxicants and indulgence in sexual depravity alongside that tune to be totally fitting and opportune, is called music!

It is significant to note that at times, in a composition, the tune is music and essentially futile, as are the wordings - like when inappropriate poems are recited in the company of a ravishing tune; at other times only the tune is music, like when Qurʾanic verses, supplications or poems of a lofty standard are recited in a tune that is suitable to gatherings of the corrupt ones. Both forms are prohibited (take note).

It is also necessary to mention that at times, 'music' is looked upon as possessing two meanings - the general meaning and the specific one. The specific meaning is the meaning that we have presented above – tunes, which stir up passions within man and are connected to sinful gatherings. But the general meaning alludes to every pleasant and melodious sound, and it is for this reason that those, who view music in the general meaning, have divided it into two categories, lawful and unlawful music - lawful music being the melodious sounds, which do not incite immorality and are not associated with such gatherings, whereas unlawful music being the tunes, possessing the characteristics mentioned above.

Thus, as far as the prohibition of music is concerned, there exists no difference of opinion; the disagreement lies in the manner in which it is interpreted.

However, music, like every other concept, also possesses forms which are doubtful such that at times, a person fails to comprehend if a particular tune is associated with immoral gatherings or not. In such cases, on the basis of the Law of Barāʿat, it is regarded as being lawful (of course, after possessing a sufficient awareness of the conventional meaning of this, there appears no reason to regard those heroic tunes and music, which are associated with battle, sports or the like, as unlawful).

Nevertheless, there are other aspects too that are related to this issue, such as exceptions to music, which have been claimed by some but rejected by others, and which need to be discussed in books of jurisprudence.

The final point which we feel ought to be mentioned here is that the discussion presented above was with respect to singing - however the issue of use of musical instruments and the prohibition associated with it is entirely different, and beyond the scope of our present discussion.

The philosophy behind the prohibition of music

A careful study of the meaning of music together with the conditions mentioned by us clearly elucidates the philosophy that lies behind its prohibition. A short study reveals the following evils associated with it:

1. Encouragement towards moral degradation

Experience, which is the best witness, has revealed that many individuals, influenced by music, have abandoned piety and turned towards lust and immorality. Musical gatherings are usually centres of various wrongdoings and it is music that serves to fuel these evils. According to some reports appearing in foreign newspapers, in a gathering of a group of girls and boys, a special music was played which induced so much excitement in them that they rushed towards each other and began indulging in such obscene acts that one is ashamed to even make a mention of them.

The commentary Rūḥūl Maʿānī, narrates that one of the elders of Bani Umayyah said to them: "Stay away from music for it reduces modesty, increases lust, shatters (one's) personality, is a successor and substitute for intoxicants and leads to the same deeds, which arise out of intoxication."[123]

This goes to show that even they had perceived its evil. If the Islamic traditions have repeatedly stated that music fosters the 'hypocritical soul' within man, it is an allusion to this reality, for such an individual possesses a soul that has become polluted as a result of depravity and being distanced from piety. If the traditions also state that the angels do not enter into houses in which music is played, it is because of this pollution and uncleanness, for the angels are entities that are pure and seek purity.

2. Heedlessness with respect to the remembrance of Allāh

In some of the Islamic traditions, music has been interpreted to mean lahw (amusement, idle sport) - an allusion to the fact that music intoxicates a person in lust and passion to an extent that it makes him heedless of Allāh.

In a tradition from Imam ʿAlī ﷷ we read:

كُلُّ ماَ اَلْهىَ عَن ذِكرِ اللّٰهِ فَهُوَ مِنَ الْمَيْسَرُ.

"Every thing that causes man to become unmindful of Allāh, (and drowns him in lust) is a gamble."[124]

3. The harmful effects upon the nerves

In reality, music is one of the important factors that cause narcosis of the nerves. In other words, at times narcotics enter the body through the mouth, just like alcohol; or by means of the faculty of smell, such as heroin; or as a result of injection, like morphine; or, at times, by means of the ears, such as music.

[123] *Tafsīr Rūḥul Maʾānī*, vol. 21, pg. 60
[124] *Wasāʾil ash-Shīʿa*, vol. 12, pg. 235

It is for this reason that, at times, certain forms of music lead people into such high spirits that they come to possess a state similar to intoxication; of course, there are also times when this state is not reached, but nevertheless it does induce a state of mild stupor. It explains why many of the evils of narcotics are also witnessed in music.

A close scrutiny of the biographies of celebrated musicians would reveal that, in the course of their lives, they slowly began to suffer from mental and psychological problems – some of them became patients of psychological disorders; some others, losing their aptitude and mental acumen, entered into the realms of lunacy and insanity; a group turned paralytic and helpless; and some others, while in the course of their musical performance, suffered sudden cardiac arrest due to an increase in blood-pressure.[125]

Some of the books written in connection with the detrimental effects of music upon the human nerves, while mentioning the biographies of some of the distinguished and celebrated musicians and singers, state that in the course of their presentations, they suffered a sudden stroke and died instantly in that very gathering.[126]

In short, the extent of the harmful effects of music upon the human nerves - leading to the frontiers of insanity, pressurising the heart and the blood, and other undesirable stimulations - are in such a measure that there is no need for any protracted discussion.

The statistics of deaths and fatalities reveal a great increase in sudden deaths in our era, as compared to the past; several causes for this phenomenon have been mentioned, one of them being the increase in song and music, globally.

Music – one of the tools of the colonialists

The world colonialists have always dreaded awareness on the part of the general masses - especially the youths – and hence, a part of

[125] *Tāthīr-e-Musiqī Bar Rawān Wa Aaʿsāb*, pg. 26
[126] Ibid., pg. 92 onwards

their extensive programme for the continuation of colonialism focuses on submerging societies into unawareness and ignorance, and increasing unhealthy forms of amusement and entertainment.

Today, it is not just the commercial aspect which motivates the narcotics trade but rather, it is an important political tool in the politics of the colonialists. Establishment of prostitution centres, gambling clubs and other unhealthy forms of amusements are some of the other tools – one of the most important amongst these being the expansion of the song and musical domain; a tool, which they insist on utilizing for anaesthetizing people's thoughts and ideas. One can see why music occupies a major portion of the airtime on global radio services and is one of the principal items associated with the programmes of mass media.[127]

30. What is the philosophy behind the prohibition of fornication?

1. Fornication leads to the occurrence of turbulence within the familial mechanism and severance of the bond between fathers and children - a bond, whose existence not only occasions social recognition but is also responsible for the support for the child and for laying the foundations of love, which causes this support to continue all throughout the individual's lifetime.

In short, in a society containing a great number of illegitimate and fatherless children, the social ties, which are governed by familial connections, become highly unstable.

To comprehend the significance of this issue, it is sufficient to ponder for a moment that if fornication were to be declared lawful in the entire human society and the matrimonial system were to be uprooted from it, the nondescript children who would come into the world in such circumstances would not be supported by anyone - neither at the time of their birth nor as they are growing up.

Apart from this, they would be left deprived of the element of love, which plays a decisive role in curbing crime and violence.

[127] *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 17, pg. 22

Consequently, human society would be transformed into a society, totally beastly and replete with violence in every sphere and dimension.

2. This reprehensible act brings about various kinds of individual and social conflicts; stories about the state of affairs prevailing within localities of disrepute and centres of corruption are illustrative of the reality that horrendous crimes are committed alongside sexual digressions.

3. Experience has revealed and science has proved that this act is responsible for the dissemination of various diseases, and despite all arrangements made for the purpose of combating its effects; statistics reveal the extent to which people have lost and still lose the soundness of their health by means of it.

4. This act can result in the abortion of the foetus, the killing of children and the termination of lineage. This is because, such women are never willing to foster their children; basically, the existence of children is a great impediment for them, hampering them from continuing their evil acts, and hence they constantly strive to get rid of them.

The practical failure of the absolutely absurd hypothesis - that these children can be gathered in institutions under the supervision of the government - has become plainly evident for it has been established that it is extremely difficult to foster fatherless and motherless children in this fashion. Besides, the result is often totally undesirable - nondescript, hardhearted and criminal children, lacking in everything!

5. It should not be forgotten that the objective of marriage is not just to satiate the sexual desire; rather, partnership in leading one's life, spiritual intimacy, mental tranquillity, nurturing the children and collaboration in every aspect of life, are some of the effects of marriage - none of which are attainable without confining a man and a woman to each other and prohibiting other women.

In a tradition, Imam ʿAlī ﷷ says[128]: "I have heard the Noble Prophet ﷺ say: "Fornication possesses six evil effects, three of which are (seen) in the world while three are (seen) in the Hereafter.

As for those that are (seen) in this world: It robs away the purity and the illumination from man, severs his livelihood and hastens his end.

And those (seen) in the Hereafter are: The wrath of Allāh, the severity of the Reckoning and the entry - or permanence of stay - in the fire of Hell."[129]

31. What philosophy governs the prohibition of homosexuality?

Notwithstanding the fact that in the West, where sexual uncleanness is extraordinarily excessive and such indecencies are not regarded as reprehensible, the spread of such indecencies can never serve to diminish the hideousness associated with them, and their moral, psychological and social evils continue to exist as before (it has been heard that in some of the countries like England this issue has been legalized on the basis of a law that has been, with great impudence, ratified by parliament).

At times, some materialists who are tainted with such uncleanness, in an effort to justify their acts, state: We have not come across any medical prohibition in connection with it!

But they seem to have forgotten that fundamentally, every kind of sexual deviation tends to affect all the mental and physical structures of human existence, disrupting its balance and equilibrium.

Explanation: Man, by nature, possesses a sexual inclination towards the opposite sex - this inclination being one of the most fundamental of human impulses and one, which guarantees the continuation of his lineage. Any act that serves to divert this

[128] *Majmaʿ al-Bayān*, vol. 6, pg. 414
[129] *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 12, pg. 103

inclination from its natural course generates a disease and brings about a psychological deviation within man.

Neither a male, who possesses inclination towards the same sex nor one, who indulges in such an act is a complete male. Books dealing with sexually related issues mention homosexuality as one of the most dominant of deviations.

Continuation of this act gradually kills one's sexual inclination towards the opposite sex and the person indulging in such acts tends to develop feminine sentiments, eventually coming to suffer from an excessive sexual debility, technically referred to as frigidity, such that after a period he loses the ability to perform natural sex (sexual intercourse with the opposite sex).

In view of the fact that sexual sentiments of a man and a woman influence their physical organisation as well as the moral and mental conditions specific to them, the harmful influence upon a person's body and soul as a result of losing their natural emotions is all too evident. It is even possible that individuals, suffering from such a deviation, come to acquire a measure of sexual debility to the extent that they lose the ability to procreate.

These individuals are usually psychologically unsound and, experiencing a sense of strangeness with respect to their own selves and also with respect to the society in which they live, gradually lose their willpower (a precondition for every kind of success) causing a kind of indifference to creep into their souls.

If they do not resolve to mend their ways soon, refuse to seek the help of a medical practitioner or a psychologist despite the need for it and this act transforms itself into a habit for them, it would be extremely difficult for them to abandon it. Nevertheless, it is never too late to give up this obnoxious habit - what is required is resolution and application.

In any event, this mental vagrancy gradually leads them towards drugs, intoxicants and other moral deviations and this is another great calamity.

Interestingly, the Islamic traditions have alluded to these evils by means of short but pithy expressions. A person once questioned Imam as-Ṣādiq ﷺ "Why has Allāh prohibited sodomy?" The Imam ﷺ replied: "Had sex with boys been lawful, the men would have become independent of women (and disinclined towards them) causing man's lineage to become terminated and natural heterosexual intercourse to come to an end, and this would have brought about great moral and social evils."[130]

Significantly one of the punishments, stipulated by Islam for individuals who practice these acts, is that it is forbidden for the 'doer' to marry the sister, mother or daughter of the person, subjected to sodomy. That is, if the act were to occur before marriage, these women would become forbidden for him, eternally.[131]

32. What is the philosophy behind the prohibition of (consumption of) liquor?

There are many reasons for this prohibition including the following.

Effects of alcohol upon age

A distinguished Western scholar claims that for every 51 deaths amongst youths aged between 21 and 23 years who are addicted to alcoholic beverages, there are not even 10 deaths amongst those youths not addicted to alcohol.

Another reputed scholar has proved that a significant number of 20 year-old youths, who are expected to live up to the age of 50 years, do not live beyond 35 years as a result of consumption of alcohol.

[130] *Wasā'il ash-Shī'a*, vol. 14, pg. 252
[131] *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 9, pg. 194

According to experiments conducted by 'life insurance' companies, it has been established that the life-span of those addicted to alcohol is 25 – 30 percent less than that of those not addicted to it.

Another statistic reveals that the average age of those addicted to alcohol is between 35 years and 50 years, whereas the average age of non-addicts, when hygienic and sanitary issues are observed, is above 60 years.

The effects of alcohol upon the offspring

If a person happens to be intoxicated at the time of conception, 35 percent of the acute alcoholic effects are passed on to the child and if both - the husband and the wife - were to be intoxicated, 100 percent of the acute effects are transferred to the child. In order that the effects of alcohol on children are better comprehended, we seek to present some statistics here:

Of the children having been born prematurely, 45% of them had fathers and mothers, both of whom were alcoholics, 31% had mothers who were alcoholics and 17% had fathers who were alcoholic.

6% of infants, who died shortly after birth, had alcoholic fathers while 45% of them had alcoholic mothers.

75% of children possessing stunted growth had parents who were addicted to alcohol while 45% of them had mothers who were addicted to it.

Amongst the children who suffered from a lack of sufficient intellectual and mental abilities, 75% of them had alcoholic mothers while 75% of them had alcoholic fathers.

Effects of alcohol upon the morals

Attachment towards the family and the love for the wife and children diminishes so much in an alcoholic person that it has been repeatedly observed that fathers have killed their children with their own hands.

The social harms of alcohol

Statistics compiled by The Legal Medical Institute of the city of Neon in 1961 of social crimes reveals that alcoholics were involved in 50% of all of homicide cases, 77.8% of violence and physical abuses, 88.5% of thefts, and 88.8% of sexual offences. These figures reveal that an overwhelming majority of crimes and offences are perpetrated under the influence of alcohol.

The economic harms of alcoholic drinks

A celebrated psychiatrist says: Unfortunately, the governments only take into consideration the monetary and tax benefits derived from alcohol but fail to consider the enormous funds spent to rectify its evils. If the governments were to take into account the increased psychological sicknesses in the society, the losses of a decadent society, the waste of precious time, the driving accidents resulting from intoxication, the corruption of generations, the laziness, idleness and nonchalance, the cultural backwardness, the troubles faced by the police, the reformatories for the guardianship of alcoholic children and the hospitals for them, the judicial setup to look into crimes committed by the alcoholics and the prisons to house the offenders, and other losses that stem from the consumption of alcohol, collectively, they would realize that the income derived from the taxes imposed on alcoholic drinks is nothing compared to the above-mentioned losses. Besides, the deplorable consequences of alcohol consumption cannot be gauged in terms of just money, for death of near ones, breaking up of families, lost ambitions and loss of intellect can never be compared to money.

In summary, the harms of alcohol are so numerous that according to one scholar, if the governments guarantee to close down fifty percent of the public houses, it can be guaranteed that we would not be in need of fifty percent of the hospitals and asylums. (Even) if the alcoholic drinks trade were to be profitable for man – upon the assumption that the forgetting of his sorrows and a few moments of

insensibility could be viewed as a benefit for him – nevertheless, its harms are so much more immense, extensive and protracted that the two just cannot be compared.[132]

At this juncture, we present some other points in the form of statistics in connection with the enormous consequences of this harmful act:

i. According to statistics published in England in connection with delirium tremens, when this condition was compared to other forms of insanity, it was found that as opposed to 2249 cases of delirium tremens, there were only 53 cases of insanity which were caused by other factors![133]

ii. Figures procured from American asylums indicate that alcoholic patients constitute 85% of those suffering from psychological disorders.[134]

iii. An English scholar by the name of Bentham writes: "In northern countries, alcoholic beverages make a person fatuous and imbecile, while in the southern countries, it makes them insane. He then adds: The religion of Islam has prohibited all kinds of alcoholic drinks and this is one of the distinctive features of Islam."[135]

iv. If statistics were to be compiled of those, who, in intoxication have committed suicides, perpetrated crimes, destroyed houses and dashed the aspirations of families, the figures would be truly staggering.[136]

v. In France, 440 people die as a result of alcohol, everyday![137]

vi. According to another piece of data, deaths in the United States resulting from psychological disorders in a period of one year are twice that of the casualties suffered by it during World War II, and

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[132] *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 2, pg. 74
[133] *Symposium on Alcohol*, pg. 65
[134] Ibid.
[135] *Tafsīr Tantāwi*, vol. 1, pg. 165
[136] *Dāiratul Maʿārif-e-Farid Wa Judai*, vol. 3, pg. 790
[137] *Balāhā-e-Ijtimāʿī-e-Qarn-e-Mā*, pg. 205

according to researchers, alcohol and cigarettes play a pivotal role vis-à-vis psychological disorders in that country![138]

vii. According to statistics published by an individual by the name of Huger on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the magazine Sciences, 60 percent of intentional murders, 75 percent of violent and physical abuses, 30 percent of immoral acts (including incest with the immediate relatives!) and 20 percent of thefts are related to alcohol and alcoholic drinks. According to another set of figures compiled by this same scholar, 40 percent of juvenile offenders have an alcoholic record.[139]

viii. From the economic point of view, in England itself, the losses incurred every year as a result of absenteeism on the part of employees due to alcoholism has been estimated to be around 50 million dollars, which, by itself, is sufficient for the building of thousands of kindergartens, primary and secondary schools.[140]

ix. As per statistics published in connection with the losses arising as a result of alcoholic beverages in France, alcohol burdens the French budget by 137 billion francs per year (not including the personal losses incurred by the individuals), details of which are as follows:

60 billion francs spent towards courts and prisons.

40 billion francs expended for social benefits and charities.

10 billion francs utilized for covering the expenses of the hospitals for alcoholics.

70 billion francs for maintaining social security!

Thus, it becomes plainly clear that the number of psychologically diseased individuals, hospitals, homicides, violent disputes, thefts,

[138] *Majmua'-e-Intishārāt-e-Nasl-e-Jawān*
[139] *Symposium On Alcohol*, pg. 66
[140] *Majmua'-e-Intishārāt-e-Nasl-e-Jawān*, 2nd year, pg. 330

offences and accidents are directly proportional to the number of public houses that exist.[141 and 142]

33. What is the philosophy that governs the prohibition of (consumption of) pork?

A pig, even for the Europeans who principally consume pork, is a symbol of dastardliness, and is an animal that is filthy and squalid. This animal, in sexual issues, is extraordinarily nonchalant and reckless, and apart from the effects of its meat upon the temperament - an issue that has been scientifically established - its effects, especially with respect to recklessness in sexual affairs, are clearly observed.

The prohibition of the consumption of pork had been proclaimed in the Sharīʿah of Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام too, while in the Gospels the sinners have been likened to the pig, which, in the course of anecdotes, has been declared to be the personification of the Satan.

It is a matter of great astonishment that some people still insist on eating its meat despite witnessing with their own eyes that on the one hand its nourishment is usually filth - at times consuming its own excrement - while on the other hand it is also plain for everyone to see that the meat of this dirty animal contains two forms of a dangerous parasite by the name of trichina and one form of the parasite taenia.

A single trichina is capable of spawning 15,000 times within a period of one month and causes within man various diseases such as anaemia, vertigo, diarrhoeal fever, rheumatic pains, nervous stress, internal itching, accumulation of fat, exhaustion and extreme lassitude, breathing problems, difficulty in chewing and swallowing food etc.

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[141] *Nashriya-e-Markaz-e-Mutālaʿ-e-Peshraftha-e-Iran* (about alcohol and gambling)

[142] *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 5, pg. 74

One kilogram of pork is likely to contain 400 million trichinae and perhaps this was the reason that, some years back, consumption of pork was prohibited in some parts of Russia.

Truly, the religion whose rulings acquire newer manifestations with the passage of time is the religion of Allāh - the religion of Islam.

Some people assert that by present day means it is possible to eliminate all these parasites and make pork devoid of them, but even upon the supposition that use of sanitary equipments or cooking of meat at high temperatures completely eliminates all the parasites, nevertheless the harms associated with pork cannot be denied for according to the incontrovertible law referred to earlier, the meat of every animal bears the traits of that animal and, by means of the glands and the hormones secreted by them, influences the conduct of those, who consume it. Thus, consuming pork may transfer the attributes of sexual depravity and indifference towards the affairs of the womenfolk of the family - the most blatant traits of the male members of this species - into the person who consumes it.

And perhaps, one of the reasons for the excessive sexual profligacy dominant in the West could be consumption of the meat of this sordid animal.[143]

34. What is the philosophy behind the prohibition of sexual intercourse during menstruation?

Copulating with women in this state, in addition to being revolting, also entails great harm and this is a fact that has also been corroborated by present-day medical studies. Some of the harms are: Possible occurrence of infertility in the man and the woman, creation of an environment conducive to the development of microbes of sexual diseases such as syphilis and gonorrhoea, inflammation of the female genitals, entry of the menstrual matter - replete with microbes from within the body - into the male reproductive organ and several other detriments, which are

[143] *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 1, pg. 586

mentioned in books of medicine. It is for this reason that doctors prohibit sexual intercourse with such women.

The bleeding during menstruation is related to the congestion of the uterine vessels and the flaking of its mucus; the ovaries too are in tune with these vessels in this act of congestion.

Almost contemporaneous to menstruation the female ovule passes through the fallopian tube and enters the uterus so that, in the eventuality of the arrival of the male sperm, the two, in collaboration with each other, can form the embryo.

Initially, the abovementioned blood discharge is colourless and irregular but soon becomes red and regular till, near its conclusion, it once again becomes light in colour and slips into irregularity.[144]

Basically, the blood that is discharged every month during menstruation is the blood that gathers in the internal uterine vessels for the presumptive nourishment of the embryo. We do know that every month a woman's uterus produces one ovule and simultaneous to this the internal vessels, gearing themselves up for the purpose of nourishing the embryo, become replete with blood. If the ovule, having entered into the womb after having passed through the fallopian tube, encounters the male spermatozoid, an embryo is formed and the blood present in the vessels is utilized for its nourishment. But if not, the blood, as a result of flaking of the womb's mucus and the rupturing of the walls of the vessels, gets discharged from the womb in the form of menses.

Thus, it becomes plainly apparent as to why copulation in such a state is detrimental and prohibited. The womb, during this discharge, does not possess any kind of natural preparedness to accept the spermatozoid and thus comes to suffer harm.[145]

[144] *Iʿjāz-e-Qur'ān*, pg. 55, 56
[145] *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 2, pg. 92

35. What is the philosophy for the prohibition of marriage with one's 'immediate relatives'?

In verse 23 of Sūratul Nisā, we read:

﴿ حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ أُمَّهَاتُكُمْ وَ بَنَاتُكُمْ وَ أَخوَاتُكُمْ وَ عَمَّاتُكُمْ وَ خَالاَتُكُمْ وَ بَنَاتُ الأَخِ وَ بَنَاتُ الأُخْتِ وَ أُمَّهَاتُكُمُ اللاَّتِي أَرْضَعْنَكُمْ وَ أَخوَاتُكُمْ مِنَ الرَّضَاعَةِ وَ أُمَّهَاتُ نِسَائِكُمْ وَ رَبَائِـــبُكُمُ اللاَّتِي فِي حُجُورِكُمْ مِنْ نِسَائِكُمُ اللاَّتِي دَخَلْـــتُمْ بِهِنَّ فَإِنْ لَمْ تَكُونُوا دَخَلْتُمْ بِهِنَّ فَلاَ جُناحَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَ حَلاَئِلُ أَبْنَائِكُمُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ أَصْلاَبِكُمْ وَ أَنْ تَجْمَعُوا بَيْنَ الأُخْـــتَيْنِ إِلاَّ مَا قَدْ سَلَفَ إِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ غَفُوراً رَحِيماً ﴾

"Forbidden to you are your mothers and your daughters and your sisters and your paternal aunts and your maternal aunts and brothers' daughters and sisters' daughters and your mothers that have suckled you and your foster-sisters and mothers of your wives and your step-daughters who are in your guardianship, (born) of your wives to whom you have gone in, but if you have not gone in to them, there is no blame on you (in marrying them), and the wives of your sons who are of your own loins and that you should have two sisters together, except what has already passed; surely Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful."

The question that arises here is: What is the philosophy behind the prohibition of marriage with one's maḥārim?

In this verse allusion has been made towards the maḥārim - meaning the ladies with whom marriage is forbidden - and on the basis of it, we can conclude that there are three ways by which this relationship can come into existence:

1. By birth – This is referred to as 'genealogical relationship'.

2. By matrimony – This is referred to as 'causal relationship'

3. By suckling – This is referred to as ‘foster relationship’

Foremost, alluding to the maḥārim by birth, who constitute seven groups, the verse says:

﴿ حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ أُمَّهَاتُكُمْ وَ بَنَاتُكُمْ وَ أَخوَاتُكُمْ وَ عَمَّاتُكُمْ وَ خَالاَتُكُمْ وَ بَنَاتُ الأَخِ وَ بَنَاتُ الأُخْتِ ﴾

“Forbidden to you are your mothers and your daughters and your sisters and your paternal aunts and your maternal aunts and brothers’ daughters and sisters’ daughters.”

It should be noted that the term ‘mother’ does not intend only the lady, who directly gives birth to a person but also includes the paternal and maternal grand-mothers and great grand-mothers. Similarly, ‘daughter’ does not mean the direct daughter only, but also includes the grand-daughters and the great grand-daughters, and similarly so with the other five groups.

Even though unsaid, it is clear that all the people (except for a very few), experience a sense of revulsion and reprehension towards such a marriage, and even the Magi, who in their ancient books have permitted these marriages, today reject them.

Although there are some people who strive to present the issue as one having its origins in an ancient habit and custom, it should be borne in mind that a habit or a custom can never be eternal and universal, for we know that if a law is found to exist universally amongst all the individuals of the human species and all throughout the ages, it generally reveals that the law is in conformity and agreement with the innate nature of man.

Apart from this, today the reality has been established that marriage between consanguineous individuals entails numerous dangers such as manifestation and aggravation (not generation) of latent and hereditary diseases. There are some people who, apart from the maḥārim, do not even approve of marriages between

relatively distant relations, such as first cousins, and are of the opinion that such alliances tend to accentuate the dangers of hereditary diseases[146]. Nevertheless, if this issue does not create problems with respect to distant relatives (and usually it does not), it is surely bound to create problems with respect to the immediate relatives, amongst whom the ties of consanguinity are more intense.

Besides, generally there does not exist a sexual attraction and appeal amongst the maḥārim, since they mostly grow up together and thus appear common and ordinary to each other – rare and exceptional cases cannot form the criterion for general and universal laws - and we know that the existence of sexual attraction is a condition for the consolidation of a matrimonial alliance. Thus, if marriage were to take place between the maḥārim this alliance would be weak and unstable.

Then the Qurʾan mentions the maḥārim that come into existence by way of suckling, and says:

﴿ وَ أُمَّهَاتُكُمُ اللاَّتِي أَرْضَعْنَكُمْ وَ أَخَوَاتُكُمْ مِنَ الرَّضَاعَةِ ﴾

"...And your mothers that have suckled you and your foster-sisters."

Although the Qurʾan, in this portion of the verse, has only mentioned two groups from this category – the mothers and the sisters –according to numerous traditions, those who become maḥārim as a result of suckling are not confined to these two groups only. The well-known tradition of the Noble Prophet ﷺ states:

[146] Nonetheless, in Islam, marriages between first cousins have not been prohibited since such marriages are not akin to marriages with the maḥārim and the likelihood of occurrence of eventualities in them is lesser. We ourselves have been witness to numerous instances of such marriages and the children that have resulted from them have been physically healthy and intellectually gifted.

يَحرَمُ مِنَ الرِّضاَعِ ماَ يَحَرَمُ مِنَ النَّسَبِ.

“All those, who become prohibited by means of genealogy, also become prohibited by means of suckling.”

Of course, there are numerous details and particulars associated with the measure of milk-feed and the manner and conditions of feeding (the child) which bring about this relationship, and these have been mentioned in books of jurisprudence.

The philosophy behind prohibiting marriage with such maḥārim is that the bones and flesh of the child develop as a result of the milk of the person and subsequently, the child comes to develop a resemblance with the (actual) children of the person. For example, if a woman suckles a child in a measure that its body develops and grows as a result of her milk, a kind of resemblance comes into existence between this child and the other (real) children of the woman. In reality, each of them come to be regarded as a part of the woman and are like brothers who are related by birth.

In the final phase the Qurʾan, alluding to the third kind of maḥārim, classifies them into three categories:

a) ﴿...and mothers of your wives﴾. As soon as the formula of marriage is recited and a woman gets married to a man, her mother, grand mother etc, all become eternally prohibited for the man.

b) ﴿...and your step-daughters who are in your guardianship, (born) of your wives to whom you have gone in.﴾ Just a mere recitation of the marriage formula does not make the woman’s daughters, obtained from a previous husband, prohibited for the husband – rather, the condition is that in addition to the recitation of the formula, the marriage should also be consummated. The presence of this condition in this case endorses the fact that the ruling in the case of the wife’s mother, mentioned in the previous sentence, is not bound by this condition, and technically speaking, it strengthens the general nature of that ruling.

Although, apparently, the condition:

فِي حُجُورِكُمْ.

"...in your guardianship" gives the impression that if the woman's daughter, borne from a previous husband, is not brought up by the husband, she is not forbidden for him, however, from the context of the traditions and the incontrovertibility of the ruling, it can be concluded that this condition is not, technically speaking, a precautionary condition but rather a pointer towards the reason for this prohibition. This is because such daughters, whose mothers embark upon a new marriage, are usually young in age and are mostly brought up under the care of the new husbands as if they were their own daughters. The verse states: These are, in reality, similar to your own daughters. Does a person ever marry his own daughter? The selection of the word رَبائب which is the plural form of رَبِيبَة –meaning 'the one brought up' – is also for this very reason.

Pursuant to this part, the verse, for emphasizing the issue, adds: if you have not engaged in sexual intercourse (with the woman) her daughters are not forbidden for you:

﴿ فَإِنْ لَمْ تَكُونُوا دَخَلْتُمْ بِهِنَّ فَلاَ جُناحَ عَلَيْكُمْ ﴾

c) ﴾...and the wives of your sons who are of your own loins.﴿ In reality, the expression مِن اَصلاَبكُم (of your own loins) has been employed so as to annul an incorrect custom of the Era of Ignorance. In those days it had been a common practice to select individuals and adopt them as one's own sons; the people would adopt an individual, who was someone else's son, as their own son and all the rulings that were associated with a real son would come to be associated with this adopted son. Accordingly they never married the wives of their adopted sons. In Islam, adoption and all the rulings (of the Age of Ignorance) associated with it have been regarded as totally baseless.

d) ﴾...and that you should have two sisters together﴿ i.e., marrying two sisters, at one time, is not permissible. Thus, there is no harm in marrying two or more sisters if the marriages were to take place at different times and after being separated from the previous sister.

Since it had been a common practice to take two sisters as wives at the same time and there were individuals, who had entered into such marriages, the Qurʾan, after the abovementioned sentence, says:

﴿ إِلاَّ مَا قَدْ سَلَفَ ﴾

﴾...except what has already passed...﴿; i.e. those, who have entered into such marriages before the revelation of this law shall not face chastisement, however they would now have to select and keep one of the two and leave the other.

The secret behind the prohibition of such marriages by Islam could be that two sisters, due to their genealogy and natural attachment, possess intense fondness for each other, however when they become rivals they are not able to preserve and maintain the former affection for each other and consequently, a kind of emotional conflict manifests within them, which is detrimental for them. This is because the impulse of 'affection' and that of 'rivalry' are in a state of perpetual conflict within them.[147]

[147] *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 3, pg. 326

THE NOBLE QURʾAN

36. Has the Qur'an been altered?

The popular opinion amongst the Shiʿīte and Sunni scholars is that no alteration has taken place in the Qurʾan, and the Qurʾan that is in our hands today is the very same Qurʾan that had been revealed to the Noble Prophet ﷺ - to the extent that not even a single letter or a word has been added to it or deleted from it.

Some distinguished Shiʿīte scholars - ancient and recent - who have explicitly attested to this reality, are:

1. Sheikh Ṭusī, renowned as Sheikh al-Ṭāifah, who has presented a lucid, explicit and conclusive discussion on this matter at the beginning of his famed commentary, al-Tibyān.

2. Sayyid Murtaḍā, one of the most celebrated 4th century (Hijri) scholars of the Twelve-Imam sect.

3. The Chief of the Traditionists, Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. Bābwaih al-Ṣadūq, while mentioning the beliefs of the Twelve-Imam sect, states: "Our belief is that no alteration has taken place in the Noble Qurʾan."

4. The distinguished commentator al-Ṭabrisī too, in the introduction of his commentary, has presented a vocal discussion in connection with this issue.

5. Kāshif al-Ghitā, one of the eminent later-generation scholars.

6. Muḥaqqiq Yazdī, in his book al-ʿUrwatul Wuthqā, has reported the opinions of a great number of Shiʿīte jurists regarding non-alteration of the Qurʾan.

7. It has been reported that numerous other great scholars like Sheikh Mufīd, Sheikh Bahāʾī, Qadhi Nūrullāh and other Shiʿīte scholars also harboured this belief and opinion.

Preponderantly, great and celebrated Sunni scholars too hold this belief.

It should be pointed out that some Shiʿīte and Sunni scholars of Ḥadīth, whose knowledge with respect to the Noble Qurʾan was deficient, have reported the occurrence of alteration in the Qurʾan. Nevertheless, by means of explanations on the part of great scholars of both the sects, this false belief has been discarded.

Sayyid Murtaḍhā, replying to the book al-Masāil al-Tarablasiyāt, says: "The veracity of the Qurʾan is so evident that (the certainty of) it is similar to (the certainty of) the knowledge that we possess with respect to the well-known cities of the world, great historical events and popular books."

In the aforesaid example, can a person ever harbour doubts about the existence of cities like Makkah, Madinah, London or Paris, even though he may have never travelled to these cities? Can one ever deny the Mongol invasion of Iran, or the French Revolution, or for that matter World Wars I and II?

Why can one not deny the above? It is because all these have reached us as a result of successive transmissions and narrations. Similarly the case is similar with the verses of the Noble Qurʾan and we shall discuss this topic further a little later.

If biased individuals have attributed this belief to the Shiʿītes with the intention of sowing discord amongst the Shiʿītes and Ahlus Sunnah, the books of great and celebrated Shiʿīte scholars are sufficient to prove false their claims.

It is not strange that a person like Fakhr Rāzī, who is known to us as a person displaying a particular bias and partiality with issues relating to the Shiʿītes, under the discussion pertaining to verse 9 of Sūratul Ḥijr, says:

﴿ اِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَ اِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُوْن ﴾

"Surely, We have sent down the Reminder (the Qurʾan) and surely, We (Ourselves) shall be its Guardian" is evidence to prove false the

claims of the Shiʿītes that there has occurred alteration and addition and deletion in the Noble Qurʾan!

It ought to be expressly stated that if his allusion is towards the great and renowned Shiʿīte scholars and researchers, then it should be known that none of them have ever possessed such a belief and opinion; and if his allusion is towards a weak and an unauthentic view existing amongst the Shiʿītes, a similar view is prevalent amongst the Ahlus Sunnah too - one, which is neither recognized by them nor by us.

The renowned researcher Kāshif al-Ghitā in his book Kashf al-Ghitā declares:

لاَ رَيْبَ اَنَّهُ (اَيِ الْقُرْآن) مَحْفُوْظٌ مِنَ النُّقْصَان بِحفْظِ الْمَلكِ الدَّيَّان كَماَ دَلَّ عَلَيْهِ صَرِيْحُ الْقُرْآنِ وَ إِجْماَعُ الْعُلَماَءِ فِي كُلِّ زَمَانٍ وَ لاَ عِبْرَةَ بِنَادِرٍ.

“There is no doubt that the Qurʾan has been protected from any reduction (and alteration) as a result of Allāh’s protection – as is indicated by the explicit statements of the Qurʾan and the consensus of the scholars in every era; and any opposition (to this belief) by a handful of individuals carried no significance and authenticity.”[148]

The history of Islam has seen numerous such inappropriate attributions, which only originate as a result of prejudice. We do know that the cause of some of these misunderstandings have been due to the enemies, who used to create such issues in an effort to ensure that no unity is established within the ranks of the Muslims.

The state of affairs reached such a stage that the renowned author from the Ḥijāz, ʿAbdullāh ʿAlī al-Qasīmi, in his book al-Sirā’, while criticizing the Shiʿītes, says:

[148] The commentary *Aʿlā al-Raḥmān*, pg. 25

الشيعة هم أبدا أعداء المساجد و لـــهذا يقل أن يشاهد الضارب في طول بلادهم و غرضها مسجدا.

"The Shiʿītes have always been the enemies of mosques and for that reason if a person were to travel the length and breadth of Shiʿīte cities, he would come across very few mosques!"

Reflect hard! For here in the Shiʿīte inhabited cities we tire ourselves counting the mosques which are found in the streets, bazaars, lanes and even by-lanes and at times there are so many mosques in one place that some people clamour out: Enough! Let us focus on other things too. Despite this we find this renowned author asserting things, which, for those of us residing in these regions, only serve to evoke laughter, and so what Fakhr Rāzī has ascribed to us should not cause too great an astonishment.[149]

37. How is the Qur'an a miracle?

In connection with the greatness of the Noble Qurʾan, we begin by quoting a few statements from some of the renowned personalities and also from those individuals, who have been accused of standing up to combat the Qurʾan.

1. ʿAbu al-ʿAlā Muʿarrī (accused of attempting to challenge the Qurʾan) says: "It is a matter of consensus amongst all the people - Muslims and non-Muslims alike - that the book that Muḥammad ﷺ has brought, has subjugated the intellects and till today, no one has been able to bring forth the like of it. The style of this book does not tally with any of the styles that have been prevalent amongst the Arabs, such as oratory, 'rajaz'[150] poetry, rhymed prose of the clergy etc.

[149] *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 11, pg. 18

[150] A particular manner of reciting epic verses.

The superiority and the attraction of this book is of such high calibre that if one verse from it is placed amongst the words of others, it would shine out like a radiant star in a pitch-black night!"

2. Walīd b. Mughaīrah al-Makhzūmī – He was well known for his prudence and good management amongst the Arabs who used to benefit from his acumen and managerial skills to solve their social problems in the Pre-Islamic era. It was for this reason that he was called:

رَيْحاَنَةُ قُرَيْشٍ.

"...the crème de la crème of the Quraish."

When he heard the first few verses of Sūratul Ghafir from the Noble Prophet ﷺ he appeared in a gathering of the tribe of Banī Makhzum and said: "By Allāh! I have heard a speech from Muḥammad, which resembles neither the speech of humans nor that of the fairies."

وَ إِنَّ لَهُ لَحَلاَوَةً وَ إِنَّ عَلَيْهِ لَطَلاَوَةً وَ إِنَّ أَعْلاَهُ لَمُثْمِرٌ وَ إِنَّ أَسْفَلَهُ لَمُغْدِقٌ وَ إِنَّهُ لَيَعْلُو وَ لاَ يُعْلَى.

"His speech possesses a special sweetness and an exceptional beauty. The top of it (like the fruitful branches of a tree) is full of fruits and the bottom of it is (like the roots of an ancient tree) firm and strong. It is a speech that shall prevail over everything and none shall prevail over it."[151]

3. Thomas Carlyle, the renowned historian, in respect of the Qur᾿an says: "If we cast one look at this holy book, we observe that salient realities and characteristics of the secrets of existence have been so nurtured in its contents that its greatness and truthfulness becomes plainly manifest – and this is a great distinction, which is specific only to the Qur᾿an and not seen in any other scientific, political or financial work. Yes, some of the books do tend to deeply affect the

[151] *Majmaʿ al-Bayān*, vol. 10, Under *Sūratul Muddaththir*

mind of the reader - however, this just cannot be compared to the influence and effect of the Qurʾan. As such, it must be said: "The fundamental distinction of the Qurʾan and its basic tenets lies in its truthfulness, pure sentiments, salient topics and the important themes – none of which provide room for any kind of scepticism and uncertainty - and in the fact that it encompasses all the virtues and excellences that bring about human perfection and happiness, and very clearly defines and illustrates them all."[152]

4. John Davenport – the author of the book, *An Apology for Mohammad and the Koran*, writes: "So exempt, indeed, is the Koran from these undeniable defects, that it needs not the slightest castigation, and may be read, from beginning to end, without causing a blush to suffuse the cheek of modesty itself."[153]

He also says: "It is universally allowed to be written with the utmost purity and elegance of language in the dialect of the tribe of the Koreish, the most Noble and polite of all the Arabs, but with some mixture, although very rarely, of other dialects. It is, confessedly, the standard of the Arabian Language, and abounds with splendid imagery and the boldest metaphors ... and is generally vigorous and sublime."[154]

5. Goethe, the German scholar and poet says: "The Koran is a work with whose dullness the reader is at first disgusted, afterwards attracted by its charms, and finally irresistibly ravished by its many beauties."[155]

On another occasion, he writes: "For years on end priests, lacking cognizance of Allāh, had held us back from comprehending the realities of the Noble Qurʾan and the greatness of the person who had brought it - Muḥammad ﷺ – yet, as we have treaded the path

[152] From the introduction of the book *Sāzmānhā-e-tamaddun-e-Imparaturi-e-Islām*.
[153] *An Apology For Mohammad And The Koran*
[154] Ibid.
[155] Ibid.

of knowledge and science, curtains of ignorance and baseless prejudice moved aside from before us and very soon this indescribable book (Qurʾan) attracted the world towards itself - profoundly influencing the knowledge and science of the world – eventually becoming the pivot of thoughts and ideas of the people of the world!"

He also says: "Initially we had turned away from the Qurʾan but it was not long before this book attracted our attention towards itself leaving us baffled and amazed in a measure that compelled us to bow our heads in submission before its lofty and scientific laws!"

6. Will Durant – the famous historian says: "The Qurʾan has generated within the Muslims such self-esteem, justice and piety that the like of it has not been witnessed in any region of the world."

7. Jules La Beaume - the French thinker and writer, in his book An Explanation of the Signs, states: "The people of the world came to acquire science and knowledge from the Muslims, who acquired them from the Qurʾan, which is an ocean of knowledge, and caused streams (of knowledge) to flow from it in the world, for mankind..."

8. Another orientalist, writes: "It is mandatory for us to acknowledge that natural, astronomical, philosophical, mathematical sciences, which have seen a boom in Europe, are mainly due to the blessings of the Qurʾanic teachings and as such, we are indebted to the Muslims - in fact, Europe, in this regard, is one of the cities of Islam."

9. Doctor Laura Veccia Vaglieri - a professor in the University of Naples - in her book The Rapid Growth of Islam, writes: "The divine book of Islam is one example of a miracle. It (Qurʾan) is a book, which cannot be imitated. The style and modes of the Qurʾan do not have any literary precedent. The influence that this style has upon the soul of man is a result of the distinctions and excellences that it

possesses. How can this miraculous book be a work of Muḥammad ﷺ, who had been an unschooled Arab?

In this book we observe treasures and reservoirs of knowledge which is beyond the ability and capacity of the most intelligent individuals, greatest philosophers and strongest political and legal personalities. And it is because of these aspects that the Qurʾan just cannot be the work of an educated or a learned person."[156 and 157]

One of the things which proves the authenticity of the Qurʾan and its revelation by Allāh is the fact that there is no contradiction or discrepancy in the entire Qurʾan. To understand this reality, consider the following explanation: The mentality of man is constantly in a state of change. The Law of Development - under normal circumstances - envelopes man, his thoughts and mentality, and with the passage of time, tends to change his ideas and speech. If we reflect carefully, we shall observe that the works of a writer are never similar and uniform; even in one book, the start and the end are seen to possess variations - especially so if a person finds himself in the midst of great and important events - events, which would establish the foundations of an all-encompassing ideological, social and doctrinal revolution. Such a person, however much he may try to maintain uniformity in his works, would never be successful – especially if he is unschooled and fostered in an environment that is totally backward and undeveloped.

However, the Qurʾan, which has been revealed over a period of 23 years under various conditions, in various environments and in accordance with the corrective and educative needs of man, is a book which deals with a variety of topics. It is unlike other ordinary books that confine themselves to just one topic like politics, society, philosophy, law or history; rather, it is a book that, at times, talks

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[156] *The Rapid Growth of Islām* - assistance has been taken from the book, *The Qur'an and the Final Prophet* for the above discussion in connection with the miracles of the Qur'an.

[157] *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 1, pg. 135

about Unity and the mysteries of creation, at other times about decrees, laws, customs and etiquettes, and on occasions about the past nations and their shocking histories, and about advices, admonitions, worship and man's relation with Allāh - and as Doctor Gustav Lebon puts it: "Qur᾿an, the divine book of the Muslims is not restricted to religious teachings only but also contains political and social rulings for the Muslims.

A book possessing such features would normally not be free of contradictions and discrepancies. However, when we witness that despite these aspects all its verses are in complete harmony with each other and without the slightest discrepancy, contradiction or asymmetry, we can safely surmise that this book is not a product of human thoughts, rather it is a book that has been sent down by Allāh, a fact which has been emphasized by the Qur᾿an itself."[158,159 and 160]

Verses 12 to 14 of Sūratul Hūd once again stress the miraculous nature of the Qur᾿an and declare that this is not an ordinary speech and also not a consequence of human thoughts; it is a divine Revelation, which finds its origin in the Infinite Knowledge and Power of Allāh. For this reason it puts forth a challenge and dares the entire world to pick up the gauntlet and step forward to combat it (by bringing the like of it). In view of the fact that the contemporaries of the Noble Prophet ﷺ and all the communities that have existed, till today, have failed to stand up before this challenge – expressing their willingness to face every other difficulty in trying to put Islam down but shying away from endeavouring to combat the Qur᾿an by bringing the like of it - it is plainly evident that basically such a task was - and is - beyond the ability of man. And is miracle something other than this?

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[158] *The Qur᾿an and the Final Prophet*, pg. 309
[159] *Sūratul Nisā*, Verse 82 (Tr.)
[160] *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 4, pg. 28

Even today, this call of the Qurʾan still rings in our ears and this eternal miracle still invites the entire world towards itself, challenging all the knowledgeable and scientific circles to combat it, not only with regards to eloquence - beauty and attractiveness of speech - but also with respect to its contents - sciences which, in that period, had been hidden from man; laws and rulings that guarantee prosperity and deliverance for the human species; statements and explanations that are free from contradictions, discrepancies and prevarications; historical accounts that are free from myths, exaggeration and idle talks - and the like.[161]

Sayyid Qutb, in his commentary, In the Light of the Qurʾan, has reported that some materialists, who had presented themselves at a convention of orientalists in Russia in 1954, in a bid to fault the Qurʾan, said: "This book cannot be the outcome of the thoughts and ideas of one man – Muḥammad – but it must be the result of the efforts of a large group of individuals! Moreover, it also cannot be believed that all of it had been written in the Arabian Peninsula, rather, it is certain that parts of it have been written outside it!"[162]

They found themselves helpless - since they, on the one hand, on the basis of their reasoning which revolved around the rejection of the existence of Allāh and Revelation, always sought a material explanation for every thing, whilst on the other hand were unable to accept the Qurʾan to be the product of the thoughts of an individual within the Arabian Peninsula - they had no other option except to come up with this ridiculous theory of ascribing it to a group of individuals from within and outside the Peninsula - a notion which history rejects entirely.[163]

38. Is the miracle of the Qur'an confined to its eloquence only?

Without any doubt the miracle of the Qurʾan is not restricted to its extraordinary eloquence, beauty of speech and the conveyance of

[161] *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 9, pg. 42
[162] *In the Light of the Qurʾan*, vol. 5, pg. 282
[163] *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 11, pg. 410

meanings - as some of the ancient commentators had believed - but in addition to this it is also a miracle with respect to the scientific facts contained within it, which it presented at a time when they were unknown. Furthermore, the rulings and the historical accounts were unadulterated by myths, superstitions and errors - without the existence of any kind of contradiction and discrepancy in them.

In fact, according to some commentators, the specific tone of the words of the Qurʾan are also miraculous in nature.

Various interesting testimonies have been mentioned to support this claim, one of them being the following incident, which occurred with Sayyid Qutb, the renowned commentator, who states as follows:

I shall not narrate to you the incidents that have occurred with others but only that, which took place with me and had been witnessed by six people (five others in addition to myself).

We were six Muslims, who were traversing the Atlantic Ocean on an Egyptian ship, heading for New York. There were 120 passengers, but we were the only Muslims on board. On Friday we decided to offer our Friday prayers in the vessel that was in the middle of the Atlantic; in addition to performing our religious obligation, it was also our intention to present an exhibition of Islamic fervour and zeal before one Christian missionary, who continued with his missionary work even within the ship - especially since he was even keen to convert us to Christianity!

The captain of the ship, an Englishman, granted his approval that we establish the congregational prayers on the ship's deck and in addition, even permitted the ship's personnel, all of whom were Muslims from Africa, to join us in the prayers. They were overjoyed since this was the first time that the Friday congregational prayer was being offered on a ship.

I began reciting the sermon and led the congregational prayers and interestingly enough, the non-Muslim passengers had gathered around us, watching the performance of this Islamic obligation with interest.

After the completion of the prayers a large number of passengers came forward to congratulate us upon our performance of the religious obligation, but amongst them was a lady - a Christian from Yugoslavia, who, as we came to know later, had managed to escape from the horrors of Tito and Communism - who was extra-ordinarily influenced by the congregational prayers to the extent that tears flowed down her face and she could barely control herself.

She spoke simple English and in a voice which sounded greatly impressed and filled with a special humbleness and veneration. She asked us: "In which language did your priest orate?" (She was under the impression that the prayer must necessarily be established by a priest or a clergy as is the case in Christianity, but very soon we made her realize that every Muslim could perform this Islamic ritual.) We then informed her that we spoke in Arabic.

She said: "Despite the fact that I could not comprehend a single word of what you said, I could discern quite plainly that these words possessed a mystical resonance and tune. But more importantly and that which extra-ordinarily attracted my attention was that in the speech of your leader there were certain sentences, which appeared to be more distinguished and illustrious than the others, and they seemed to possess an exceptionally deep and influencing tone such that they induced tremors within my body. Surely, these sentences were something different. I think your leader, while delivering these sentences, had been filled with The Holy Spirit!"

After a little reflection we realized that these sentences were the verses of the Qurʾan, which I had been reciting in the sermon and in the prayers. This issue shook us to the core and made us realize that the special tone and resonance of the Qurʾan possesses such

influence and effect so as to tremendously influence and inspire a lady, who could not even comprehend a single word of it.[164 and 165]

39. How do we know they have not brought the like of the Qur'an?

In verse 23 of Sūratul Baqarah we read:

﴿ وَ إِنْ كُنْـــتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَي عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُوْا بِسُوْرَةٍ مِنْ مِّثْلِه ﴾

"If you are in doubt about what We have sent down to Our Servant (Muḥammad), them produce a Sūrah (chapter) like it."

The question that arises here is: How do we know that they have not brought the like of the Qur'an?

A look at the history of Islam would provide the answer to this question. This is because within the Islamic nations, during and after the life of the Noble Prophet ﷺ - even in Makkah and Madinah - there lived fanatic and stubborn Jews and Christians, who seized every opportunity to impair the strength of the Muslims. In addition, amongst the Muslims too there lived a group of pseudo-Muslims, whom the Qur'an has named as 'hypocrites' and who shouldered the responsibility of spying for the foreign powers (like the one which has been narrated in history regarding the monk Abū ʿAmir and his cohorts from amongst the hypocrites of Madīnah, and the manner of their association with the Roman Empire, eventually resulting in the construction of Masjid al-Dhirār (Mosque of Dissension) in Madīnah and the occurrence of that peculiar incident, which the Qur'an has referred to, in Sūratul Taubah).

Undoubtedly, if this band of hypocrites and that group of hard-hearted enemies, who used to scrupulously follow the affairs of the Muslims and welcome anything and everything that could be used to the detriment of them, had managed to lay their hands upon such a book, they would have surely strived - to the maximum extent

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[164] *In the Light of the Qur'an*, vol. 4, pg. 422
[165] *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 8, pg. 289

possible - to publicize it in order to overwhelm the Muslims, or they would have, at the very least, endeavoured to preserve it.

For this reason, history has gone on to record the names of even those individuals, about whom there could exist the remotest of possibilities that they might have endeavoured to combat the Qurʾan. Some of them are as follows:

The name of ʿAbdullāh b. Muqaffa' has been mentioned in this regard and he is said to have written the book al-Durrah al-Yatīmah for this very purpose.

However, this book is presently with us and has even seen several editions in print but it does not contain the slightest indication or reference to suggest that it was authored for this purpose. We fail to comprehend how they have attributed this issue to him.

The name of the poet, Mutanabbi – Aḥmad b. Ḥusaīn Kūfī - is also included in this group and it is stated that he had claimed prophethood for himself. However there are numerous proofs, which indicate that his claims were probably more due to his highflying nature, a deprived family background and love for rank and position than anything else.

Abu al-ʿAlā Muaʿrrī, has also been accused of this task, but despite the fact that stinging anti-Islamic statements have been narrated from him, he had never claimed to contest the Qurʾan; on the contrary, he has to his credit made interesting statements regarding the greatness of the Qurʾan.

However, Musaīlamah Kadhdhāb - from the region of Yamāmah - was indeed of those, who stood up to challenge the Qurʾan. He has authored some 'verses', which are more of a recreation and amusement than to deserve any serious attention. We present below a few sentences from them:

In opposition to Sūratul Dhariyāt, he has presented the following sentences:

و المبذرات بذرا و الحاصدات حصدا و الذاريات قمحا و الطاحنات طحنا و العاجنات عجنا و الخابزات خبزا و الثاردات ثردا و اللاقمات لقما اهالة و سمنا

"By the peasants and the farmers! By the harvesters! By the separators of chaff from the wheat! By the separators of wheat from the chaff! By the makers of dough! By the bakers! By the soppers (those who crumble bread in broth)! By those who pick up the soft and oily morsels!"[166]

يا ضفدع بنت ضفدع، نقي ما تنقين، نصفك في الماء و نصفك في الطين، لا الماء تكدرين و لا الشارب تمنعين

"O' Frog the daughter of frog! Call out as much as you desire! Half of you in the water and half of you in mud; Neither do you make the water muddy nor do you prevent one from drinking the water!"[167 and 168]

40. What do al-Ḥurūf al-Muqatt'ah (The Broken Letters) of the Qur'an mean?

In the beginning of 29 chapters of the Noble Qurʾan we come across al-Ḥurūf al-Muqattʿah (the Broken Letters) and as the name implies, these letters appear to be broken up and separate from one another. They apparently do not seem to convey any meaning.

The Broken Letters have always been considered to be of the mysterious words of the Qurʾan. Commentators have presented numerous and varied interpretations for them - new suggestions surfacing with the passage of time and as a result of new research and study on the part of scholars.

Interestingly, we do not find any mention in history that the Pagan Arabs or the polytheists had ever faulted and criticized the presence of these Broken Letters, located at the start of the numerous chapters of the Qurʾan, or used their presence to ridicule the Noble

[166] *Iʿjāz al-Qurʾan* of Rāfiʿī
[167] *From The Qurʾan and the Final Prophet*
[168] *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 1, pg. 133

Prophet ﷺ. This fact itself indicates that apparently even they were not completely ignorant of the mysterious nature of these Letters.

From amongst these interpretations, there are some which appear to be more significant and authentic than others, and are also in conformity with the results of the latest research performed in this regard. We dwell on some of the most important of these here:

1. These letters refer to the fact that this divine Book - with all its greatness, which has left all the Arab and non-Arab orators astounded (over its eloquence) and has left scholars helpless and incapable of opposing and challenging it - is composed of these very alphabets and letters, which everyone is aware of.

But, despite the fact that this Book is comprised of these very ordinary letters and alphabets, its words are so well-proportioned and symmetrical, and possess such lofty meanings that they penetrate into the very core of man, filling his soul with admiration and acclaim, and forcing minds and intellects to acknowledge its greatness. The disciplined order of its words and the construction of its sentences are of the highest degree, placing the loftiest of meanings into the moulds of the most beautiful of words, in a manner that has seen no parallel.

Another point that tends to corroborate this meaning is that in 24 of the chapters which begin with the Broken Letters, these letters have been immediately followed up by the mention of the Qurʾan and its greatness, and this itself is indicative of the fact that there exists a relation between the Broken Letters and the greatness of the Qurʾan. At this juncture we present a few examples of these, as follows:

﴿ الر كِتَابٌ أُحْكِمَتْ آيَاتُهُ ثُمَّ فُصِّلَتْ مِنْ لَدُنْ حَكِيمٍ خَبِيرٍ ﴾

"Alif Lam Ra (This is) a Book, whose verses are made decisive, then are they made plain, from the Wise, All-aware."[169]

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[169] *Sūrat Hud* (11), Verse 1

﴿ طس تِلْكَ آيَاتُ الْقُرْآنِ وَ كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ ﴾

“Ta Sin. These are the verses of the Quran and the Book that makes (things) clear.”[170]

﴿ الم تِلْكَ آيَاتُ الْكِتَابِ الْحَكِيمِ ﴾

“Alif Lam Mim. These are verses of the Book of Wisdom.”[171]

﴿ المص كِتَابٌ أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ ﴾

“Alif Lam Mim Suad. A Book revealed to you.”[172]

In all of the above, as well as numerous other instances, the Broken Letters have been immediately followed up by the mention of the Noble Qurʾan and its greatness.[173]

2. Possibly, one of the objectives of these Broken Letters was to attract the attention of the listeners and to silence them and invite them to give ear. This is because the mention of these letters, in the beginning of a speech, was something strange and novel for the Arabs and would arouse their curiosity and consequently, they would listen to the speech following these letters. Incidentally, the majority of the chapters which begin with the Broken Letters are those, which have been revealed in Makkah and we do know that in Makkah the Muslims were in a minority, and the stubborn and obstinate enemies were loath to even listen to the words of the Noble Prophet ﷺ. At times they would create such uproar that the voice of the Noble Prophet ﷺ would be lost in the commotion - a fact that has also been alluded to in some of the verses of the Qurʾan (like verse 26 of the chapter Fuṣṣilāt).

[170] *Sūratul Naml* (27), Verse 1
[171] *Sūrat Luqmān* (31), Verse 1, 2
[172] *Sūratul Aʿrāf* (7), Verse 1,2
[173] *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 1, pg. 61

3. In some of the traditions of the Ahlul Bayt ﷷ, it has been mentioned that these Letters are a kind of code and an allusion to the Names of Allāh. For example (المص) in Sūratul Aʿrāf alludes to:

أَنَا اللّٰهُ الْمُقْتَدِرُ الصَّادِقُ.

Meaning, "I am Allāh, The Powerful, The Truthful." As such, each of the four letters is an abbreviated form for one of the Names of Allāh.

The act of substituting an extended form with an abbreviated version has been in practice since ancient times, although its use has assumed greater proportions in our times, for we observe numerous instances wherein elongated expressions and names of organizations have been condensed into a small and single word.

It is necessary to mention that these various interpretations for the Broken Letters are in no way contradictory to one another since it is possible for all of them to be intended together – viewing them as various latent and hidden meanings of the Noble Qurʾan.[174]

4. There is a possibility that all or at least some of these Broken Letters possess specific meanings – just as a word encompasses a meaning within itself.

Incidentally, we observe that numerous traditions and many commentators, in connection with the beginning of the chapters 'Ṭāhā' and 'Yāsīn', state that طه (Ṭāhā) is in the meaning of يا رَجُل ('O' Man!)' . In addition to this, we also come across certain Arab poems, some of which are probably associated with the period co-incident with the onset of Islam or even before it, in which the word 'Ṭāhā' possesses a meaning similar to "O' Man!' or something close to it.[175]

As one reliable source has informed us, a few Western scholars involved in the study of Islamic issues have generalized this notion to include all the Broken Letters and are of the belief that these Letters, located at the start of the chapters, are words possessing a

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[174] *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 6, pg. 78

[175] *Majmaʿ al-Bayān* in the discussion regarding the first verse of the *Sūrat Ṭāhā.*

specific meaning, some of which have been pushed into oblivion with the passage of time, while others have managed to reach us. For otherwise, as they reason, it appears very improbable that the Arab polytheists would hear the Broken Letters, not comprehend their meanings and at the same time not use it as a pretext for mocking and ridiculing - and history has not recorded a single instance where these foolish cavaliers had ever used the Broken Letters as an excuse to react in this fashion.

Although it appears difficult to accept this theory, universally and with respect to all the Broken Letters, its applicability with respect to some of them is quite acceptable; however, this is an aspect that has been an object of discussion in the Islamic sources too.

It is interesting to note that in a tradition from Imam as-Ṣādiq ﵇ we read that 'Ṭāhā' is one of the names of the Noble Prophet ﷺ and means:

يَا طَالِبَ الْحَقِّ الْهَادِي إِلَيْهِ.

"O' Seeker of The Truth (and) the guide to it."

From this tradition it can be concluded that 'Ṭāhā' comprises of two cryptic letters: طا (Ṭā), which refers to:

طَالِب الْحَقِّ.

"Seeker of Truth"

and ها (Hā), which alludes to

أَلْهَادِي إِلَيْهِ.

"The guide to it."

A final word in this regard is that the word طه (Ṭāhā) like يس (Yāsīn), with the passage of time, has gradually transformed into a proper name of the Noble Prophet ﷺ such that the children of the Noble Prophet ﷺ are also referred to as آل طه (The Children of Ṭāhā) as can

been seen in the case of Imam Mahdi ﷺ, who has been addressed as يابن طه (O' Son of Ṭāhā!) in Duaʿ al-Nudbah.

5. ʿAllāmah Ṭabāʾṭabāʾī ﵀ has presented another possibility in connection with the meaning of the Broken Letters - one, which could be regarded as another interpretation for them. The summary of his view is as follows:

When we place the chapters beginning with the Broken Letters under careful scrutiny, we observe that the chapters which begin with the same kind of Letters, contain subject-matter that is similar in nature.

For example, in the chapters which begin with حم (Ḥā Mīm), these letters are immediately followed up by the sentence:

﴿ تَنْزِيْلُ الْكِتَابِ مِنَ اللّٰهِ ﴾

"Descended this Book (Qurʾan) from Allāh." or something similar in meaning.

In the chapters which commence with الر (Alif, Lām, Rā), these Letters are immediately followed up by the sentence:

﴿ تِلْكَ آيَاتُ الْكِتَابِ ﴾

"These are the verses of the Book" or something similar to this.

In the chapters, which begin with الم (Alif, Lām, Mīm), these Letters are followed by the sentence:

﴿ ذٰلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لاَ رَيْبَ فِيْهِ ﴾

"This is the Book, there is no doubt in it" or that which resembles this in meaning.

Thus, it can be speculated that there exists a special connection between the Broken Letters and the contents of the chapters in which these Letters are located - to the extent that, the content and the meaning of Sūratul Aʿrāf (for example), which starts with المص

(Alif, Lām, Mīm, Ṣād) is consistent with the contents and the meanings of the chapters that start with الم (Alif, Lām, Mīm) and the chapter ص (Ṣād).

However, it is possible that this relationship may be far too profound for it to be fathomed by any ordinary intellect.

If the verses of these chapters were to be placed alongside each other and subjected to a comparison, it is probable that a new meaning might become manifest for us in this regard.[176 and 177]

41. Has the Qur'an attested the contents of the Torah and the Gospels?

In numerous verses of the Noble Qurʾan we find the expression that 'the Qurʾan attests the contents of the previous Books'.

In verse 48 of Sūratul Māidah, it says:

﴿ وَ أَنْزَلْنا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقاً لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ ﴾

"And We have revealed to you the Book with the truth, verifying what is before it of the Book."

This has caused some of the Jewish and Christian preachers to consider these verses as an authentication that the Torah and the Gospels have not suffered distortion and alteration, and to say: Undoubtedly, the Torah and the Gospels that are presently with us are not any different from what existed during the time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ. Thus, if there has been any alteration, it could only have occurred before the time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ. But since the Qurʾan has attested to the veracity of the Torah and Gospels of the time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ thus the Muslims should formally accept these divine, books as being unaltered and authentic.

Various verses of the Qurʾan testify that the signs and attributes of the Noble Prophet ﷺ and his religion did exist in those distorted

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[176] *Tafsīr al-Mizān*, vol. 18, pg. 5, 6
[177] *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 20, pg. 346

books, which were in the possession of the Jews and Christians then. This is because, the meaning of ‘distortion’ of those divine books surely does not mean that the entire books are false; rather, portions of the original Torah and the Gospels did exist in those books and still do, and the signs and attributes of the Noble Prophet ﷺ did exist within these books and/or other religious books which were in the possession of the Jews and Christians (and even today the glad tidings do exist in them).

Thus, the manifestation of the Prophet of Islam ﷺ and his divine Book, in practice, has attested all those signs and attributes since it is in conformity with them.

Hence, the meaning of the statement ‘the Qurʾan attests the contents of the Torah and the Gospels’ is that the attributes of the Noble Prophet ﷺ and the Qurʾan totally match and conform with what has been mentioned about them in the Torah and the Gospels.

The use of the word تصديق (attestation) in the meaning of مطابقت (conformity) is not restricted to this verse, but is also observed in other verses too, like verse 105 of Sūratul Ṣāffāt in which it is said to Ibrāhīm عليه السلام:

﴿ قَدْ صَدَّقْتَ الرُّؤْيَا ﴾

“You have attested your dream” meaning: ‘Your actions were in conformity with the dream which you had witnessed’.

And in verse 157 of Sūratul Aʿrāf, we read:

﴿ الَّذينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ النَّبِيَّ الأُمِّيَّ الَّذِي يَجِدُونَهُ مَكْتُوباً عِنْدَهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَاةِ وَ الإِنْجِيلِ ﴾

“Those who follow the Messenger-Prophet, the Ummi, whom they find written down with them in the Taurat and the Injeel...”

Here, the meaning has been mentioned explicitly, i.e., 'the attributes which they observe in him ﷺ match those that they have been found in the Torah.

In any case, the above verses only indicate on 'the practical attestation' of the Qurʾan and the Noble Prophet ﷺ with respect to his ﷺ attributes present in the ancient books, and do not suggest that all the contents of the Torah and the Gospels have been affirmed. On the contrary, numerous verses of the Qurʾan declare that they have altered and distorted the Torah and the Gospels, and this itself is a firm testimony for what has been stated above.[178]

42. Was the Qur'an collected during the time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ or after him?

We do know that the name of the first chapter of the Qurʾan is Fātiḥatul Kitāb, which means 'the Opening (chapter) of the Book (Qurʾan)', and from various traditions of the Noble Prophet ﷺ it can be plainly concluded that this chapter had been familiar, by this very name, during the time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ too.

From here we are led to a very important Islamic issue that is contrary to what is popular amongst a particular group, which is of the opinion that the Noble Qurʾan existed in a scattered form during the time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ and it was during the period of Abū Bakr, ʿUmar or ʿUthmān that it was gathered together in the form of a book. The Qurʾan, during the time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, had been gathered together and possessed the same form and arrangement as we see it today – commencing with this same chapter of al-Ḥamd. If not for this, there exists no justification for it to be named as the Fātiḥtul Kitāb, for neither was it the first chapter to have been revealed to the Noble Prophet ﷺ and nor does there exist any other reason for it to be named so.

Various other evidences also exist, which serve to corroborate this reality that the Qurʾan, in the form of a collection and assemblage as

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[178] *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 1, pg. 210

it is in our possession today, had been collected during the time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ and upon his orders.

ʿAlī b. Ibrāhīm narrates from Imam as-Ṣādiq ؑ that the Noble Prophet ﷺ said to ʿAlī ؑ: "The Qurʾan exists (in the written form) on pieces of silk, paper and the like, and are scattered (so) gather them together. The narrator then adds that ʿAlī ؑ departed from the gathering, collected them in a yellow cloth and put a seal upon it."[179]

وَ انْطَلَقَ عَلَي فَجَمَعَهُ فَي ثَوْبٍ أَصْفَر ثُمَّ خَتَمَ عَلَيْهِ.

Another testimony in this regard is that of the renowned Sunni scholar Khwarizmī, who, in his book Manāqib, reports from ʿAlī b. Riyāh that ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib ؑ and Ubayy b. Kaʿb collected the Qurʾan during the time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ.

The third evidence is the statement of the renowned Sunni author Ḥākim, in his book Mustadrak, wherein he quotes from Zaid b. Thābit: "Zaid says: 'We used to gather the Qurʾan from the scattered pieces in the presence of the Noble Prophet ﷺ and used to place them (the scattered pieces) in their respective positions according to his orders. However, these written works were still not in the form of a collection (and so) the Noble Prophet ﷺ ordered ʿAlī ؑ to gather them together in one place and asked us to be wary of losing or destroying it.'"

Sayyid Murtaḍā, the great Shiʿīte scholar says: "The Noble Qurʾan had been collected, in its present form, during the time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ."[180]

Tabarānī and Ibn ʿAsākir narrate from Shuʿbī that six persons from the Anṣār (Helpers) gathered the Qurʾan during the time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ[181] and Qutadah narrates: "I questioned Anas as to

[179] *Tārīkh al-Qurʾan*, pg. 24 by Abū ʿAbdillāh Zanjānī
[180] *Majmaʿ al-Bayān*, vol. 1, pg. 15
[181] *Muntakhab Kanz al-ʿUmmāl*, vol. 6, pg. 52

who gathered the Qurʾan during the time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ and he replied: 'Four persons, all of whom were from the Anṣār - Ubayy b. Kaʿb, Muʿādh, Zaid b. Thābit and Abū Zaid."[182] Apart from these, there are several other traditions too, but mentioning them would only serve to prolong the discussion.

In addition to these traditions that have been mentioned in the Shiʿīte and Sunni sources, the selection of the name Fātiḥatul Kitāb for Sūratul Ḥamd is a living testimony for proving this issue.

ONE QUESTION

At this point the question that arises is: how can we accept what has been stated above when it is popular amongst some of the scholars that the Qurʾan had been gathered after the Noble Prophet ﷺ (either by ʿAlī عليه السلام) or some other individual?

In answer to this, it must be said that what Imam ʿAlī عليه السلام had collected was not just the Qurʾan but, in fact, was a collection which comprised of the Noble Qurʾan, its commentary, occasions of the revelations of the verses and other related issues.

As far as ʿUthmān is concerned, there exists a Qurʾan, which indicates that he, in order to prevent discrepancies and differences with respect to the recitation of the Qurʾan, endeavoured to prepare a common Qurʾan, which possessed (a common) punctuation and manner of recitation (since till that time, punctuation had not been prevalent)

As for the insistence on the part of some, that the Qurʾan had not been gathered at all during the time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ and it was either ʿUthmān or the first or the second Caliph, who came to acquire this honour, it probably arises out of attempts to extol the virtues and excellences for them. As a result, we find that every group attributed this honour to a particular person and then narrated traditions in his favour.

[182] *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukharī*, vol. 6, pg. 102

Basically, how is it conceivable that the Noble Prophet ﷺ would overlook such an important task, whereas he had been mindful of matters that were of much less significance? Is not the Noble Qurʾan the Constitution of Islam, the great Book of training and education, and the basis for all Islamic concepts, notions and beliefs? Did the non-collection of the Noble Qurʾan during the time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ not entail the danger that parts of the Qurʾan could be lost or marred and dissentions could arise amongst the Muslims over it?

Apart from this, the famous tradition of Thaqalain, which both the Shiʿītes and the Ahlus Sunnah have narrated and in which the Noble Prophet ﷺ had said: "I leave behind amongst you two weighty things - the Book of Allāh and my Ahlul Bayt," itself proves that the entire Qurʾan had been collected in the form of a book.

If we observe the traditions which indicate that the Qurʾan had been collected by a group of companions under the supervision of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, the fact that we differ in the number of individuals engaged in the task, should not be a matter of concern for it is possible that each of these traditions mentions only some of the individuals who had been engaged in the task of collecting and gathering the Noble Qurʾan.[183]

43. What are the 'clear' and the 'ambiguous' verses?

In verse 7 of the chapter Āle ʿImrān we read:

﴿ هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْهُ آياتٌ مُحْكَمَاتٌ هُنَّ أُمُّ الْكِتابِ وَ أُخَرُ مُتَشَابِهاتٌ ﴾

"He it is Who has sent down to you (O' Muḥammad!) the Book, of it there are some clear Verses, these are the basis of the Book and others are ambiguous."

[183] *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 1, pg. 8

The question, which arises here, is: What is meant by the ‘Clear’ and ‘Ambiguous’ verses?

The word مُحكَم has been derived from احكام which means ‘to prohibit’ and it is for this reason that fundamental and firm issues are called محكم, for they prohibit and repel away destructive factors from themselves. In addition, firm and conclusive talks and ideas, which keep away every possibility of contradiction from themselves, are referred to as محكم.

Thus, the Clear verses are those verses, whose meanings are so clear and manifest that there exists no need for any sort of discussion with respect to their meanings - such as the following verses...

﴿ قُلْ هُوَ اللّٰهُ أَحَدٌ ﴾

“Say: He Allāh is One (alone).”[184]

﴿ لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ ﴾

“Nothing whatsoever (is there) resembling the like of Him.”[185]

﴿ اللّٰهُ خالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ ﴾

“Allāh (alone) is the Creator of all things.”[186]

﴿ لِلذَّكَرِ مِثْلُ حَظِّ الْأُنْثَيَيْنِ ﴾

“The male shall have the equal of the shares of two females.”[187]

And thousands of other similar verses - dealing with issues relating to ʿAqāid (beliefs), laws and rulings, preaching, history - are all Clear verses.

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[184] *Sūratul Ikhlāṣ* (112), Verse 1
[185] *Sūratul Shuraʿ* (42), Verse 11
[186] *Sūratul Raʿd* (13), Verse 16
[187] *Sūratul Nisā* (4), Verse 11

These Clear verses have been named as Ummul Kitāb (Basis of the Book) i.e. they are the basis for the interpretation and explanation of the other verses.

The word مُتَشابَه (which appears in the verse under consideration) basically means 'a thing, whose various parts are similar to one another'. For this reason, the sentences or words, whose meanings are ambiguous and at times appear to possess several meanings and possibilities, are called مُتَشابَه. This is exactly what is meant by the Ambiguous verses of the Qur᾿an – for these are the verses of the Qur᾿an, which initially and at first sight appear to be ambiguous and possess several meanings (although, after taking into consideration the Clear verses, their meanings become evident and manifest.)

Although commentators have presented numerous possibilities in connection with the meaning of 'Clear' and 'Ambiguous' verses, what we have stated above is not only in total concordance with the original meaning of these two words, but also with the occasion of revelation of this verse, the various traditions which explain the verse and with the verse itself. This is because in the later portion of the abovementioned verse, we read that certain individuals always utilize the Ambiguous verses as their pretext (to promote their personal motives). It is evident that they misuse those verses, which at first sight appear to possess several meanings and interpretations, and this very fact conveys that متشابه (Ambiguous) is in the meaning stated above.

The verses that speak of the Attributes of Allāh and the details of the Day of Judgment can be presented as examples of the Ambiguous Verses. Some of these verses are as follows:

﴿ يَدُ اللّٰهِ فَوْقَ أَيْدِيهِمْ ﴾

"The hand of Allāh is above their hands"[188], which is regarding the Power of Allāh;

[188] *Sūratul Fatḥ* (48), Verse 10

﴿ وَ اللّٰهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴾

"And surely, Allāh is All-Hearing, All-Knowing"[189], which refers to the Knowledge of Allāh;

﴿ وَ نَضَعُ الْمَوَازِينَ الْقِسْطَ لِيَوْمِ الْقِيامَةِ ﴾

"And We shall set up the balances of justice on the Day of Judgment"[190], which speaks of the means of measuring the Deeds.

It is evident that neither does Allāh possess hands and ears (meaning a special limb or organ) nor are the Scales for measuring the Deeds similar to what we are accustomed to; rather these are expressions which refer to a universal concept and meaning for Power, Knowledge and Measurement.

It is necessary to mention that محكم and متشابه have also been used differently in the Noble Qur'an. In the first verse of Sūratul Hūd, we read:

﴿ كِتابٌ أُحْكِمَتْ آياتُهُ ﴾

"A book whose verses are firmly arranged (together)." In this verse, all the verses of the Qur'an have been characterized as محكم, denoting that all the verses of the Qur'an are interrelated and in complete harmony with one another.

In verse 23 of Sūratul Zumar we read:

﴿ كِتاباً مُتَشابِهاً ﴾

"A Book consistent (in its parts)", which means 'a book, all the verses of which are consistent and similar to one another with respect to correctness, veracity and authenticity'.

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[189] *Sūratul Baqarah* (2), Verse 224
[190] *Sūratul Anbiyā* (21), Verse 47

From what we have stated with respect to the Clear and Ambiguous verses it is clear that a truth-seeking person, in order to comprehend the Speech of Allāh, has no option other than to place all the verses alongside each other and derive the truth and reality from them. If at first sight, he faces an intricacy and ambiguity in the apparent meanings of some of the verses, he should clear the vagueness by taking into consideration the other verses of the Qurʾan thereby reaching the essence of the verses. In reality, the Clear Verses, from one perspective, are like highways while the Ambiguous Verses are like byways. It is apparent that if a person happens to lose his way in the byways, he endeavours to reach the nearest highway and find his way from there.

Reference to the Clear Verses as Ummul Kitāb (Basis of the Book) is yet another point which serves to corroborate this reality. The word Umm means 'basis' and 'origin' of a thing and this is why a mother is referred to as Umm, for she is the basis of a family and a shelter for the children in times of trouble and distress. Similarly, the Clear Verses are regarded as the basis, foundation and the mother of the other verses.[191]

44. Why are some of the verses of the Qur'an ambiguous?

Why is it that the Qurʾan, despite being light and illumination, and a true and manifest speech and a book that has come for the guidance of the general masses, contains the Ambiguous Verses? Why are the contents of some of the verses vague, so as to be misused by those seeking to sow dissension and discord?

This is an issue which is immensely important and thereby calls for great attention. For the most part, it is possible that the following aspects could be reasons for the existence of the Ambiguous Verses in the Qurʾan:

a. Words and expressions, which are used by humans for the purpose of interacting with one another, have only been created to

[191] *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 2, pg. 320

fulfil the needs of their day-to-day lives; it is for this reason that when we step beyond the finite boundaries of this material world and the discussion dwells upon, for example, the Creator, Who is Infinite in every respect, we observe very clearly that our words do not possess the ability to hold and convey those lofty meanings. As a result, we are forced to utilize words, which are non-expressive in various aspects. This non-expressiveness and insufficiency of the words is the cause of a considerable portion of the Ambiguous Verses of the Qur᾽an. Verses like:

﴿ يَدُ اللّٰهِ فَوْقَ أَيْدِيهِمْ ﴾

"The hand of Allāh is above their hands."[192]

﴿ أَلرَّحْمٰنُ عَلَي الْعَرْشِ اسْتَوَى ﴾

"The Beneficent (Allāh) on the 'Arsh' is firm."[193]

﴿ إِلـــىٰ رَبِّها نَاظِرَةٌ ﴾

"Unto their Lord (they will be) attentive."[194]

and words like سَمِيْعٌ (All-Hearing) and بَصِيْرٌ (All-Seeing) are some examples of this category, whose meanings become clear and manifest upon consulting the Clear Verses.

Many of the realities (of the world of Existence) are related to the 'other world' or the metaphysical world – a realm, which is beyond the horizons of our thoughts - and being imprisoned in the dimension of time and space, we are unable to perceive the depths of those meanings. The loftiness of the horizons of these meanings and the inability on the part of our thoughts to comprehend such meanings become another reason for many of the verses to appear

[192] *Sūratul Fatḥ* (48), Verse 10
[193] *Sūrat Tāhā* (20), Verse 5
[194] *Sūratul Qiyāmat* (75), Verse 23

ambiguous - like some of the verses that deal with Qiyāmah and other similar issues.

This is exactly similar to the case of a person desiring to explain the issues of this world to an infant, who is in the embryonic stage in the womb of the mother. If the person does not speak, he has fallen short in his effort to convey the meaning, and if he does speak out, he has no alternative except to mention them in a general and implied manner, since the listener, in those circumstances, does not possess the ability to comprehend more than this.

c. Another of the secrets for the presence of the Ambiguous Verses in the Qurʾan is to put to work the mental and reflective machinery of man and to create within him the motivation to ponder and meditate. It is similar to the complex intellectual issues that are propounded to strengthen the mental faculty of scholars in order that they reflect more deeply and profoundly over issues.

d. A further aspect with regards to the presence of the Ambiguous Verses in the Qurʾan – an aspect also corroborated by the traditions of the Ahlul Bayt عليهم السلام - is that the presence of such verses serves to make apparent the people's intense need and dependence with respect to the divine Imams, prophets and their successors, and the reason that people flock towards these leaders in order to benefit from the knowledge and various forms of guidance that lie in their possession, and in this manner practically acknowledge their leadership. We can compare this with some of the academic books, which are formulated in a manner such that the explanation of some of the topics contained within them has been placed upon the teachers so that the students, experiencing a sense of dependency with respect to the teacher, do not sever their ties with him altogether, and as a result of this dependency acquire inspiration from his thoughts and ideas in all issues. In the case of the Qurʾan, this is a confirmation of the famous testament of the Noble Prophet صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم:

إِنِّي تَارِكٌ فِيكُمُ الثِّقْلَيْنِ كِتَابَ اللّٰهِ وَ عِتْرَتِي أَهْلَ بَيْتِي وَ إِنَّهُمَا لَنْ يَفْتَرِقَا حَتَّى يَرِدَا عَلَيَّ الْحَوْضَ.

"I leave behind amongst you two Weighty Things; the Book of Allāh and my Progeny. And surely, the two shall not separate from one another till they come to me at the Pool."[195 and 196]

45. Is Bismillāh a part of (every) chapter?

Amongst the Shiʿīte scholars there exists no difference of opinion in the fact that Bismillāh is part of Sūratul Ḥamd and every chapter of the Noble Qurʾan (except Sūratul Taubah as shall be mentioned later[197]). Basically, the presence of Bismillāh in the beginning of all the chapters in the text of the Qurʾan is itself proof of this issue since we do know that nothing has been added to the text of the Qurʾan and the mention of Bismillāh, at the start of all chapters, has been prevalent since the time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ till today.

However, as far as the Sunni scholars are concerned, the author of Tafsīrul Manār has presented a comprehensive collection of their views, which is as follows: "There exists a debate amongst scholars as to whether Bismillāh, at the start of every chapter, is a part of the chapter or not? The ancient scholars from Makkah - jurisprudents and the Qurʾan-Reciters alike - amongst them Ibn Kathīr; those from Kufah, amongst them the Qurʾan-reciters ʿAsim and Kasāʾī; some of the Companions and the Followers[198] of Madinah; Thauri and Aḥmad (in one of his two opinions) and so too Shāfiʿī and his followers – all are of the belief that it is part of the chapter. And similarly the Twelve-Imam Shiʿīte scholars and (according to them) the Companions like ʿAlī, Ibn ʿAbbas, ʿAbdullāh b. ʿUmar and Abū

[195] *Mustadrak Ḥākim*, vol. 3, pg. 148
[196] *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 2, pg. 322
[197] Note by Translator
[198] Companions of the companions of the noble Prophet ﷺ.

Hurairah; some scholars from the followers such as Saʿīd b. Jubaīr, ʿAtā, Zuhri and Ibn al-Mubarik - all have opted for this opinion."

He then adds: "Their most important proof is that the Companions and those who came after them - despite emphasizing that the Qurʾan ought to be purified from everything which is not part of it, for which reason they never mentioned 'Āmīn' at the end of the (recitation) of Sūratul Fātiḥa - were unanimous in reciting 'Bismillāh' at the start of every chapter, except Sūratul Baraat."

He then goes on to state that Mālik, the followers of Abu Ḥanīfah and some others considered Bismillāh to be a separate verse, which had been revealed to indicate the beginning of the chapters and serve as a separator between them.

He then narrates from Aḥmad (the renowned Sunni jurisprudent) and some of the Qurʾan-reciters of Kufah that they believed Bismillāh to be a part of Sūratul Ḥamd only and not of the other chapters.[199]

From what has been mentioned above, it can be concluded that a definite majority of the Ahlus Sunnah are also of the belief that Bismillāh is a part of every chapter.

We present below a few of the traditions that have been narrated by means of the Sunni and Shiʿīte chains of narrators (and confess that mentioning all the traditions that exist in this regard is beyond the scope of this work and more suited to a full-fledged jurisprudential discussion on the issue.)

i. Muāʿwiyah b. ʿAmmār, one of the companions of Imam as-Ṣādiq عليه السلام says: "I asked the Imam عليه السلام: 'When I stand for prayers, should I recite 'Bismillāh' in the beginning of Sūratul Ḥamd?' The Imam said: 'Yes'. I questioned him once again: 'When al-Ḥamd is

[199] *Tafsīr al-Manār*, vol. 1, pg. 39-40

completed and I have to recite another chapter after it, do I have to recite 'Bismillāh'? Again he ﷷ said: 'Yes.'"[200]

ii. Dār Qutni, a Sunni scholar, upon the authority of an authentic chain of narrators reports that a person approached Imam ʿAlī ﷷ and asked: "What is the 'al-Sabaʿ al-Mathānī?'"[201] The Imam ﷷ replied: "It is Sūratul Hamd." The person said: "(But) Sūratul Ḥamd has (only) six verses." Whereupon he ﷷ said: "Bismillāhir Raḥmānir Raḥīm is also one of its verses."[202]

iii. Baihaqi, the renowned Sunni narrator, upon the authority of an authentic chain of narrators reports from Ibn Jubaīr that Ibn ʿAbbās said:

إِسْتَرَقَ الشَّيْطَانُ مِنَ النَّاسِ، أَعْظَمَ آيَةٍ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْم.

"Satan has tried to steal the greatest verse of the Qur'an away from the people, and that is Bismillāhir Raḥmānir Raḥīm) (an allusion to the fact that they do not recite it at the start of the Sūrahs."[203]

Apart from all the above, the conduct of the Muslims had always been to recite Bismillāh at the start of every chapter while reciting the Qurʾan, and it has been established - by means of successive narrations - that the Noble Prophet ﷺ too used to recite it. How is it possible that the Noble Prophet ﷺ and the other Muslims would recite something that was not part of the Qurʾan and persevere in this act of theirs?

The notion that some people have stated about Bismillāh being an independent verse and a part of the Qurʾan but not a part of the chapters, is one which appears to be feeble and baseless. This is because the meaning and contents of Bismillāh indicate that it is for

[200] *Al-Kāfī*, vol. 3, pg. 312
[201] The Seven Oft-Repeated (verses) (Tr.)
[202] *al-Itqān*, vol. 1, pg. 136
[203] *Sunan of Baihaqi*, vol. 2, pg. 50

starting or initiating a task and not that it possesses a meaning that is independent. In reality, this is intense rigidity and bias that in order to prop up their opinion they present forth every conceivable possibility and consider a verse like Bismillāh - whose meaning screams out aloud that it is a beginning for that which is to come later – to be an independent verse, totally unrelated with that which is before and after it.

The only plausible objection, which the opponents possess in this regard is that when the verses of the chapters of the Noble Qurʾan are computed - with the exception of Sūratul Ḥamd – Bismillāh is usually not taken into account; rather, the verse which follows it, is regarded as the first verse.

The answer to this objection is clearly provided by Fakhr Rāzī in his commentary Tafsīr al-Kabīr when he says: "There is no harm if 'Bismillāh' is the first verse, by itself, in Sūratul Ḥamd, and a part of the first verse, in the other chapters of the Qurʾan." Thus, for example, in Sūratul Kauthar,

﴿ بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ. إِنَّا أَعْطَيْنَاكَ الْكَوْثَرَ ﴾

in its entirety, shall be considered to be one verse.

In any event, this issue is so plain that it is reported that once, during his reign, Muʿāwiyah did not recite Bismillāh during a congregational prayer. After the prayers some of the Muhājirīn (The Emigrants) and the Anṣār (The Helpers) confronted him and said:

اَسْرَقْتَ اَمْ نَسَيْتَ؟

"Have you stolen (Bismillāh) or have you forgotten it?"[204 and 205]

[204] *Sunan of Baihaqi*, vol. 2, pg. 49. Ḥākim has also mentioned this tradition in his book *Mustadrak*, vol. 1, pg. 233, and has regarded it as correct and authentic.
[205] *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 1, pg. 17

46. Why is it forbidden to give the Qur'an to a disbeliever?

Giving the Qur'an to a non-Muslim is forbidden on condition that such an act becomes cause for its disrespect and violation of its esteem, but if we know that a non-Muslim truly intends to study about Islam and thus desires to analyze the Qur'an, not only would it be permissible to give him the Qur'an but it might even become obligatory; those who have prohibited giving the Qur'an to a non-Muslim did not intend the prohibition for such a case.

Consequently, great Islamic circles insist that the Qur'an should be translated into various languages of the world in order that the invitation towards Islam reaches those who seek the truth and yearn for reality.[206]

[206] Ibid., vol. 19, pg. 417